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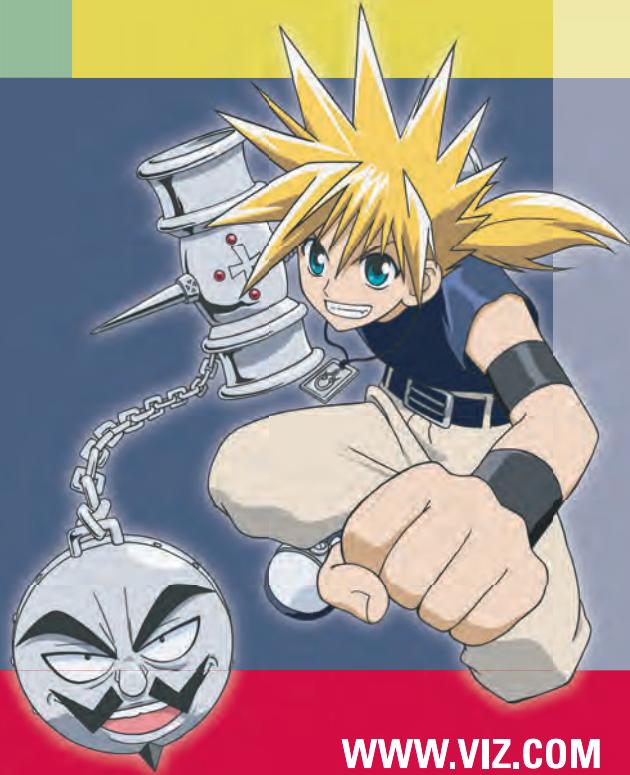
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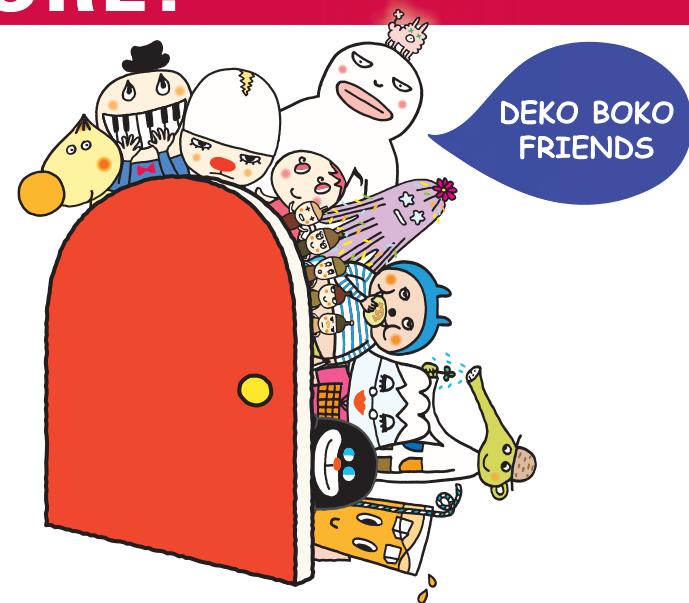


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# 49



# 56



# 63



# june 06

## Special Report

# Licensing Show '06

PSI:NY—property scene investigation

- Licensing One on One with Gary Caplan
- Virtual Showroom
- New Media Merch?

# p65



Cover

This month's editorial cover features an image of Nelvana's *Willa's Wild Life* series. International and event copies sport an ad from DIC Entertainment.

## 25 up front

- ION Media gets positively charged by kids programming
- Liberty-IDT deal draws up more content for Starz

## 35 ppd

- Aussie iTV study tells preschool programmers to toss the narrative
- PBS Sprout blossoms

## 49 licensing

- Market Watch—Specialty retailers groove to international licenses in France

## 55 retail

- KB Toys rebuilds with new product and attitude

## 59 marketing

- Postman Pat teams up with the U.S. Postal Service

## 62 digital bytes

- MGA moves to cyber space
- BitTorrent gets mainstream seal of approval

## 86 coolwatch

- Find out what kids collect

### back of the book

#### 82 People Pages

#### 84 Contact File

#### 85 Calendar

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WHEN SCHOOL IS OUT THE GALAXY IS THEIR PLAYGROUND



52  
HALF-HOURS



## Catch-22—a great book but bad news for the merch biz

**W**hile we were putting this issue together, it struck me that the kids licensing business is in something of a Catch-22 situation right now. The industry hasn't experienced the heart-pounding highs of an original, non-retro hit property in some time. In fact, a palpable sense of boredom pervaded the responses to our Virtual Showroom (see page 74). One retail buyer, for example, wished longingly for something new in the under-10 demo. "We have not seen any major new property to replace SpongeBob and Strawberry Shortcake," he said. At the same time, participants rattled off the now-familiar litany to the newcomers looking to launch: Shelf-space is tight; there aren't enough retailers and the existing ones only want the tried and true; it's never been more difficult for a new property to make it...etc.

And there's the catch. Players want an infusion of new blood, but the climate is making it next to impossible for would-be hits to break through. Even Leigh Anne Brodsky, president of merch magnet Nickelodeon & Viacom Consumer Products, in her interview with Gary Caplan says the lack of viable outlets for new properties keeps her awake at night (see page 68). Coming from one of the more powerful members of the business, it's a sobering comment.

Given that it doesn't look like Wal-Mart and Target are going to give up their stranglehold on the retail scene, it seems unlikely that the industry will find a way to resolve this paradox in the next year or two. That said, I am hopeful. Nope, not because I've taken a hallucinogen (nice try), but because thanks to the increasing draw and interactivity of new media platforms, the upcoming generation of kids will have more direct input on what properties make it on shelf than any of its predecessors.

Our expert panel (see page 72) noted most retailers and licensees aren't yet giving credence to the power of digital outlets such as broadband and mobile to drive product sales. But it's going to change. Older kids, for example, can now create their own content using clips from their favorite new show and post them on fan sites, forging a deep connection with the given property, and letting anyone with internet access know about it in the process. How hard would it be for a smart retailer to figure out that maybe, just maybe there might be a new merch opportunity there?

Speaking of infusing new blood, I'd like to announce the addition of Gary Rusak to the *KidScreen* editorial team. As Staff Writer, Gary will be contributing to most departments of the magazine with a focus on production, programming and distribution. If you'd like to introduce yourself, just drop him an e-mail at [grusak@brunico.com](mailto:grusak@brunico.com).

*Cheers,  
Lana*

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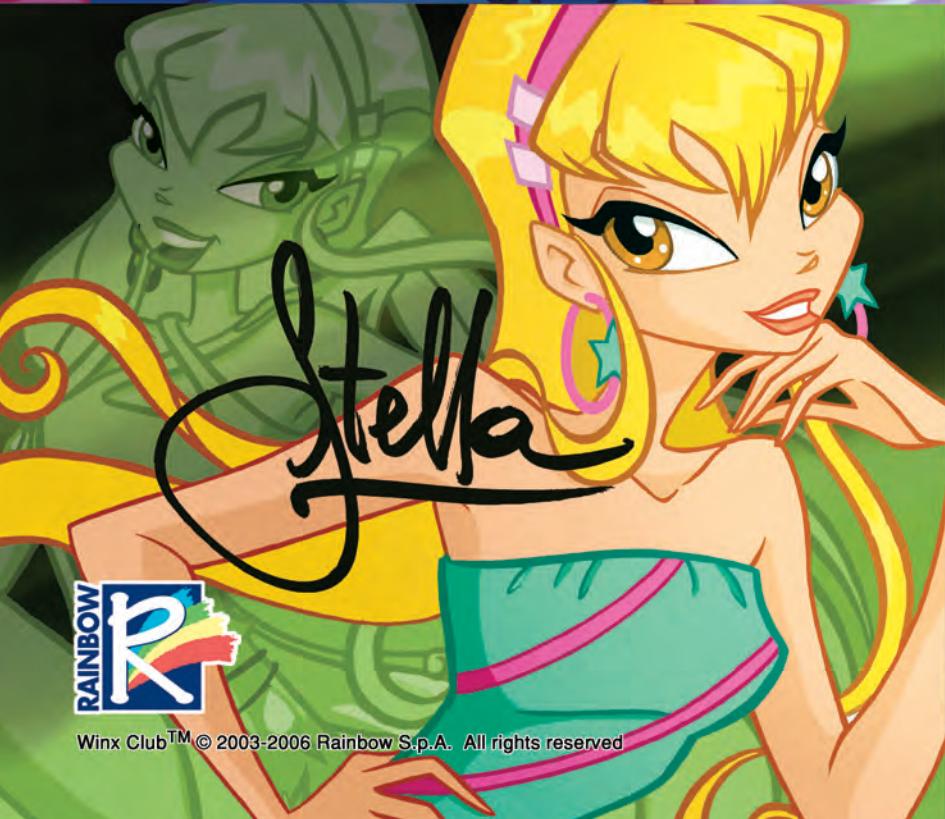
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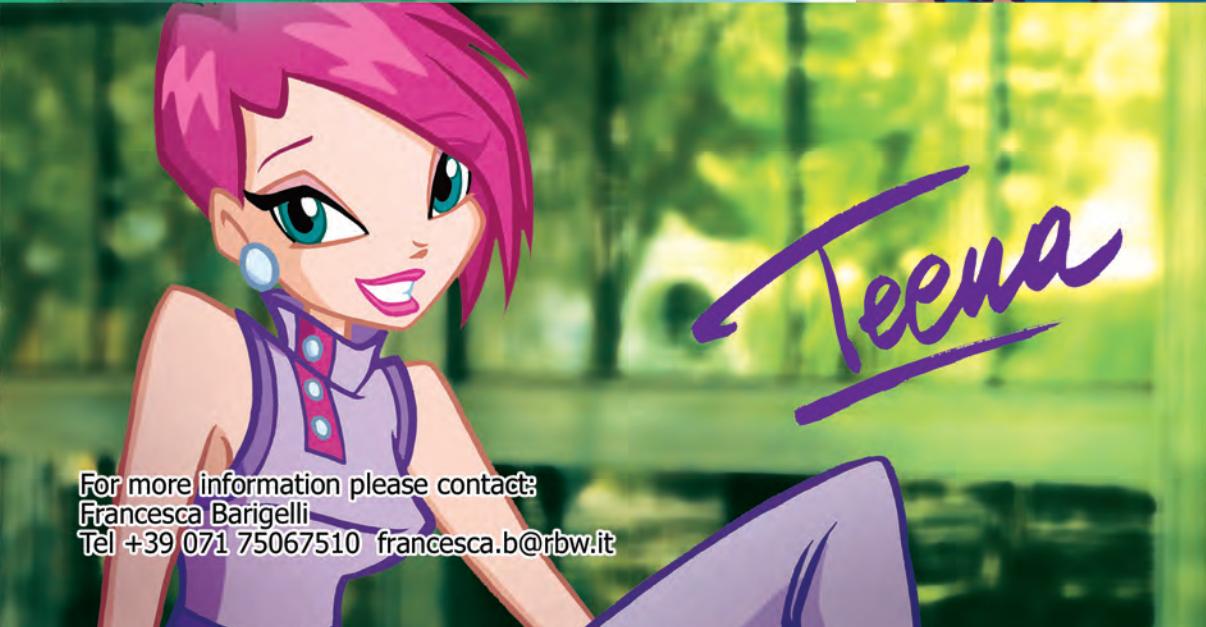




78 HALF HOURS



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# What's Up?

## publisher's notes

This month we asked a panel of industry licensing execs whether or not the new digital platforms are helping to push licensed product (see "New Media Merch? page 72). Most responded that they can, but currently aren't having a significant impact on the consumer products market—with retailers and licensees, TV and film still reign supreme. What's interesting is that in the U.S. domestic market, digital platforms such as KOL or Yahooligans aren't all that's new. The U.S. broadcast arena now hosts a number of players that are either launching or still in their infancy such as Sprout, Nicktoons Network, DIC's CBS Saturday Morning Slumber Party and the latest newcomer ION/ NBC/Telemundo's "Smart Place for Kids" (see page 25). If these TV outlets, given time to draw their target audiences, succeed in diversifying the viewing landscape in America, perhaps time will show that there's room for the licensing market to open a bit wider, too.

Thanks to everyone who came out to Santa Monica for our Brand Building in the Kids Digital Space conference in May. It was a treat to mingle, chat and learn from such an interesting group of minds from throughout the kids' entertainment industry. Our live kids' focus group that closed the event, also reminded us that no matter how well-versed we think we are in kids trends and market intel, no one can say what connects with them better than the kids themselves. Audio sessions from the event are available for download at [www.brandbuilding.kidscreen.com](http://www.brandbuilding.kidscreen.com)

Special thanks to Mr. Andy Heyward, Andy's friends, family and colleagues, Mr. Walter Cronkite and Mr. Haim Saban for making this year's Hall of Fame induction luncheon at the Santa Monica event such a fun celebration of Andy's work.

For those of you dreaming of lengthy, luxurious holidays, take a few minutes before you run away to your summer retreats and touch base with your *KidScreen* Sales rep regarding deadlines for upcoming summer and fall issues. Materials are due for the Kids TV Producers Handbook and the July/August issue on July 14; for September (MIPCOM Jr, Cartoon Forum, UK Brand Licensing) on August 22; and for October (MIPCOM, Fall Toy Show, Roadshow Europe) on September 8. Avoid the crunch and confirm your space now.

On the road this month: Katherine Gunther will be at MIFA/Annecy, and traveling to New York for Licensing Show are myself, Lana and Dan from editorial, and Myles, Mike and Katherine from the sales team. To set meetings with any of the *KidScreen* crew during the show, contact us directly, or e-mail publisher's assistant David Terpstra at [dterpstra@brunico.com](mailto:dterpstra@brunico.com). Best of luck to the LIMA awards nominees!

Enjoy the issue!

Donna MacNeil  
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### P.S. SAVE THE DATE!!

*I'm happy to announce the dates and venue for KidScreen Summit 2007, which is taking place February 7-9, 2007 at the Sheraton New York in NYC. Come for the buzz, stay for the experience. Look for registration details soon.*

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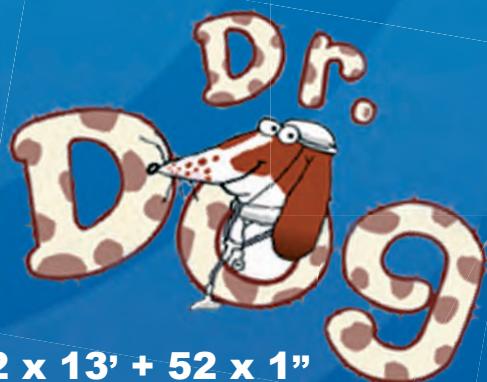
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# ION MEDIA GETS POSITIVELY charged by kids programming

by lianne stewart

**I**F the already jam-packed U.S. kids TV market appears to be changing at a rapid clip, just wait until September. That's when the newest kids destination will hit the ground running with three weekend blocks (in English and Spanish), a 24-hour diginet, a weekly strip, VOD services and an integrated website. It's a massive undertaking by West Palm Beach, Florida's ION Media Networks (formerly Paxson Communications), especially since the broadcast and cabsat distribution group has never before dabbled in kids programming. But Brandon Burgess, CEO at ION, says kids is one of the few categories that has potential to be profitable, and believes there's a lot of good programming that isn't being picked up in the States.

With a pre-existing relationship in hand (NBC owned a third of Paxson until a couple of years ago), Burgess made a strategic

call to the Peacock net when its execs were evaluating whether or not to renew its Saturday morning deal with Discovery Kids. Marc Graboff, NBC Universal Television Group's west coast president, says his team was also independently approached by a number of production companies about creating a new block. But ION's pitch to create a 24-hour diginet with NBC encouraged bigger discussions with some of these key prodcos. Burgess says Scholastic's retail and educational brand presence, Nelvana's developed content and distribution systems and Classic's library, made them ideal partners.

"Smart Place for Kids" will take over NBC's three-hour Saturday morning block, while ION Media's network of analogue channels, currently being delivered to 90-million homes, will broadcast the programming during the week. NBC's sister net, Telemundo, is slated to air Spanish-language programming under the same "Smart Place" umbrella for one-and-a-half hours on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

Although programming has yet to be formalized, Graboff says it will likely skew preschool and be culled initially from the partners' catalogues. "It will fill a vacuum when Nick Jr. leaves CBS," he says, adding advertising will probably be in the form of sponsorships à la PBS. "We're going to be discriminating and cautious when it comes to over-commercializing," Burgess adds. "Our goal isn't to have a billion dollars in revenue any time soon, so we can be more selective on commercial support."

As for the 24-hour diginet, expect to see programming from the partners that appeals to a broad range of demos, and it won't necessarily be sponsorship based. The initial schedule should also feature programming from the team's libraries. But once the networks are operational, Graboff says he's looking forward to adding original programming, including acquisitions and/or possible co-pros with the participating companies.

At press time, interviews for programming execs were underway. The successful candidates will cherry-pick series for "Smart Place" schedules and answer to the network's five partners. Programming details, official start dates, and executive hires are expected to be announced over the summer. ■

## Roll the Cartoon

by jim benton

We tried entertaining, educating, and empowering them. Now, we finally have a strategy we think will work ...



Getting your property to fly with kids can be tricky. Check out Gary Pope's analysis on page 65 to find out which brands make the little ones tick, and why

# Bite-sized bits from Licensing Show '06

by raizel robin and lana castleman

## Cartoon Network's not just monkeying around

In the year since separating from Warner Bros. Consumer Products, Cartoon Network Enterprises has been steadily adding to its property lineup. In addition to talking up Ben 10 and Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends, senior VP John Friend will be introducing hijinks-laden *My Gym Partner is a Monkey* and *The Class of 3000* at the show.



Slapstick toon *My Gym Partner is a Monkey* (top) should hit CN's core boys demo, while *Cake* (right) makes DIY cool for the tween set

Planning for a 2007 product launch, Friend says *Gym Partner's* program will definitely target CN's core boys six to 11 audience, with toys and games acting as category drivers. He believes 3000, thanks to hip-hop star Andre 3000's active involvement with both the November-launching series and consumer products plans, should have somewhat broader appeal. "Music and fashion will be the key driver because of Andre. He has amazing creative ideas," he says. As for specific strategies, Friend says it's early days yet on both counts, adding "we're open for business."

## DIC says let them license *Cake*

While gearing up for the fall launch of its Saturday morning block on CBS, DIC's on the hunt for licensing partners for two shows making their network debut. First off, there's *Cake*—a new live-action series with a 13-year-old host who embodies the craftiness of Martha Stewart mixed with the hip grrrliness of Gwen Stefani. The tween audience will learn



how to make cool versions of everyday items such as t-shirts, lampshades and CD cases. DIC's hoping to land craft & activity, fashion accessories, and room décor licensees to create product for an initial spring '07 merch wave. It should be followed that fall by apparel, footwear, domestics, interactive, and gift & novelty goods.

Also on the company's dance card is *Horseland*. The toon sprang from the virtual equine-trading site horseland.com, which currently has more than 2.4-million registered members. A tween-girl targeted program for spring 2007 is in the works and key categories will include toys, apparel, publishing, mobile and collectibles.

## Disney focuses on feisty Fairies and tweens

The Mouse House's consumer products arm is turning its attention to the magical world of Tinkerbell and co. at this year's show. *Fairy Dust and the Quest for the Egg* hit retail last fall. Aimed at girls six to nine, the novel explores the famous fairy's background. And now Disney Consumer Products is focusing on the full-blown Disney Fairies merch launch for 2007. A new toy line from Costa Mesa, California's Playmates Toys hits stores this fall and the '07 DTV *Tinkerbell and the Ring of Belief* will help drive the program. Mary Beech, VP of franchise management, says there are

a number of licensees already onboard, but the company's still looking for partners.

On the tween front, *That's So Raven* is getting some company. *Hannah Montana* debuted on Disney Channel this past spring. The live-action comedy series centers around Miley Stewart, who's a regular tween by day and a big-time pop star by night. Beech says product will tap into tween girls' desires to be a pop star. Apparel, health & beauty and electronics products should start rolling out for this year's holiday season. Retail plans are currently being hammered out and DCP's still on the lookout for licensees to bolster the program.

*"Licensing Show" continued on page 50*



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# Luner's got game

**W**hen you ask David Luner about how he became a self-confessed "game show dork," he quickly responds, "it's my family's fault." The VP of licensing at FremantleMedia's U.S. arm says his penchant for being a TV game show contestant is in his blood. Long before his time, his parents made it on to Monty Hall's *Let's Make a Deal* dressed as Raggedy Ann and Andy, and later turned up on *Card Sharks* in the '70s. Resistance was futile.

The real turning point for Luner, however, came after an aborted appearance on *Family Feud*. A then 12-year-old David was scheduled to take a shot on the *Feud* with his mom's side of the family. During the pre-show prep, the producers told female members of the team they would have to kiss host Richard Dawson. (Anyone who's seen it, would recognize Dawson's meet-and-greet as a hallmark of the show.) Luner's mom refused, point blank. "So they kicked us off," he says. "I never got to compete and that's when I determined I'd have to get on a show myself."

About a decade later, and fresh out of college, Luner got his big break on the board game-inspired *Scrabble*, hosted by Chuck Woolery of *The Dating Game* fame. He didn't walk away as a champ that day, but Woolery did slap three crisp US\$100 bills into his palm for landing on a special square—and he won the much-fabled lifetime supply of Turtle Wax. For the record, a truckload of the car-polishing substance did not arrive on his doorstep. "It was just one small box," Luner says. "One jar lasts for 10 years." [editor's note: *I, too, was a little disappointed to hear this.*]



FremantleMedia's David Luner's love of game shows translated into a dream job in the field

From there, he moved on to what would be his toughest outing—taking a turn on Alex (Mr. Jeopardy!) Trebek's *Classic Concentration*. It's not a fluffy game and involves knowing how to translate symbols into words under punitive time constraints. For example, who knew a picture of a sewing needle means eye? Well, Luner didn't, and he walked away at the show's end to a chorus of boos emanating from the studio audience.

Luner's second career as a game show contestant culminated in his 1999 appearance on the revived version of *Hollywood Squares*. As a three-day champion, he chose comedian Kathy Griffin to be his celebrity partner when he made it to the bonus round. Twenty seconds and 10 correct answers later, he walked away with US\$90,000. To celebrate he "bought a ridiculously expensive" bottle of wine and put the remaining cash into a down payment on his first home.

When Fremantle came knocking a year or so later, Luner had a tough decision to make. Licensing and developing new products based on Fremantle's extensive portfolio of classic game shows (including the *Feud*) was part and parcel of the new job offer and would make him ineligible as a contestant. Needless to say, he took the job and says working on game shows is as fun as participating in them.

Right now, he's now working on bringing family-friendly titles such as the *Price Is Right* into different media, including DVD and mobile versions. As for other game show hopefuls out there, Luner says the contestant screening process isn't intimidating. "Producers want to make sure it's good television," he says. "If you're willing to humiliate yourself a little and clap a lot when you win a toaster, I think you've got a good chance." **LC**

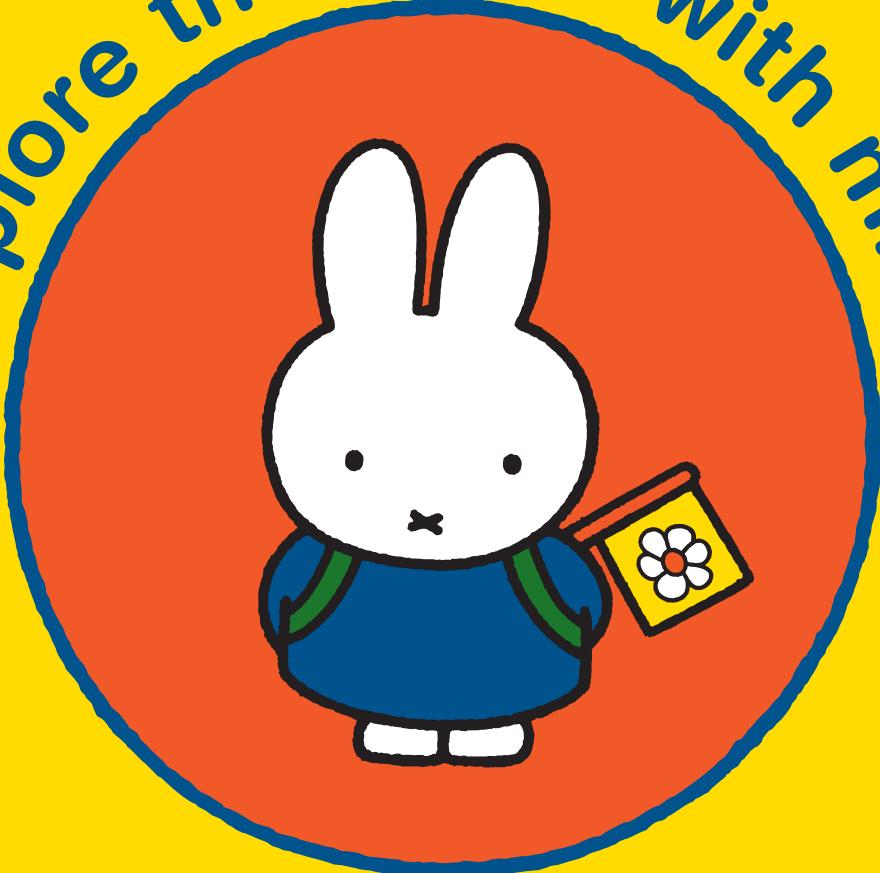
## RECOMMENDED READING

**Ty Simpson**  
President, Ty's Toy Box

- Pour Your Heart Into It:**  
*How Starbucks Built a Company One Cup at a Time*  
by Howard Schultz (Hyperion)
- The Wal-Mart Effect:**  
*How the World's Most Powerful Company Really Works—and How It's Transforming the American Economy*  
by Charles Fishman (Penguin)
- The Tipping Point:**  
*How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*  
by Malcolm Gladwell (Back Bay)

Have you got three books that you'd like to recommend to folks in the business? Drop Lana Castelman a line at [lcastelman@brunico.com](mailto:lcastelman@brunico.com).

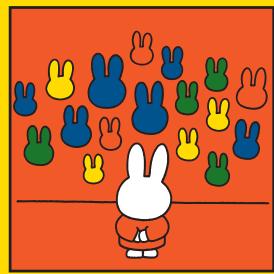
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# Apartment 11 goes global with kids formats

**W**hile an international formats market in the kids biz has yet to cut its baby teeth, there is a sense that it's on the cusp of taking off and Montreal, Canada's Apartment 11 may just help lead the way. The prodco and its distributor, L.A.-based Marvista Entertainment, are just dotting the i's on a contract with a major Euro broadcaster for format rights to its popular half-hour series *Prank Patrol*.

The series debuted on Canada's YTV last fall, and Apartment 11 president Jonathan Finkelstein says the net ordered a second season after three eps had gone to air. *Prank Patrol* has since developed a strong co-viewing audience using its Punk'd meets *Trading Spaces* formula.

Unlike the MTV/Ashton Kutcher vehicle, celebrities aren't involved. Instead kids get to build and execute pranks on their nearest and dearest. Each ep offers a recipe for a prank



Apartment 11's *Prank Patrol* gives kids the opportunity to pull pranks on their loved ones

and gives the kids the ingredients to make it. Finkelstein says creator David Hansen spends a lot of time in coffee shops "dreaming up insane scenarios, and then we try and find kids to do them." Some of the more notable stunts have involved kids building video games that come to life at the touch and constructing lake-inhabiting monsters.

*Prank Patrol* has been nominated for a Banff World Television Award this year, and The Apartment 11 crew has become somewhat expert in creating kid-sized reality shows in the past three or so years. Prior to breakthrough *Prank*, *Mystery Hunters* (now in its second season) debuted on YTV in 2004 and the *Iron Chef* meets *Fear Factor*-inspired *Surprise! It's Edible Incredible!* is going into its third season on Canadian pubcaster CBC.

Finkelstein isn't taking much time off to celebrate. Apartment 11 has a number of projects in the development hopper.

First up is *Other World*, a ghoulish fiction twist on the reality genre. Targeted at older tweens and teenagers, the live-action comedy is about a teenager who accidentally winds up on a website that acts as a gateway to a paranormal parallel universe filled with vampires, werewolves and generally creepy creatures. The teen then gets thrown into a house with these spooky inhabitants and winds up competing against them à la *Big Brother*. "It's really about growing up and realizing you're not the only freak around," says Finkelstein. A bible's currently being hammered out and it will move into scripting shortly.

Animation is also on Finkelstein's radar. Something of a departure from the prodco's live-action slate is a toon in development that aims to convey the principles of science and environmental studies to kids in a fun way. The concept is based on a French-language science magazine for kids published out of Montreal called *Les Débrouillards*. It's early days, but the plan is to center the series around a secret club that uses science and technology to resolve problems, whether it's saving the world or helping out community members on a smaller scale. ■

## Euro airwave toppers

### Ireland (kids ages four to 14 in April 2006)

Program	Channel	Rating
1. Disney's the Kid	RTE1	8.6
2. Trollz	RTE2	7.2
3. The PowerPuff Girls	RTE2	6.9
4. Yu-Gi-Oh!	RTE	6.7
5. 13 Ghosts of Scooby-Doo	RTE2	6.2
6. Tom and Jerry Kids	RTE2	6.1
7. All Grown Up	RTE2	5.6
8. Sabrina the Teenage Witch	RTE2	5.5
9. That's So Raven	RTE2	5.4
10. American Dragon: Jake Long	RTE	5.2

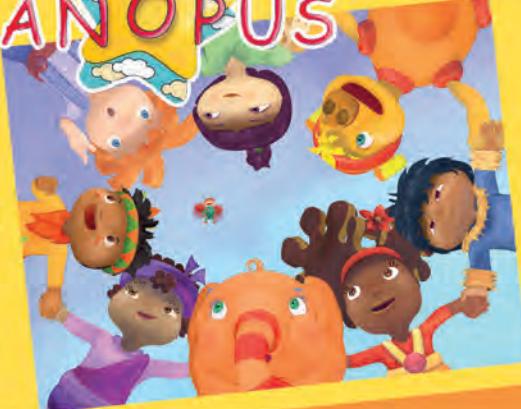
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# Liberty-IDT deal draws up more programming for Starz

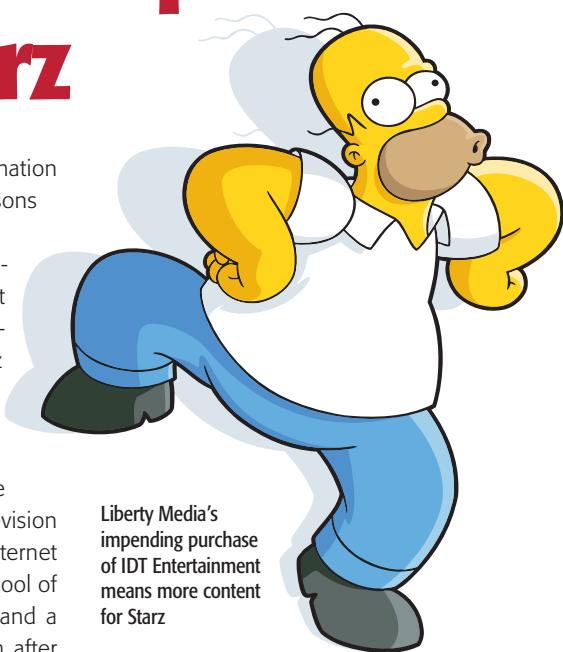
**L**iberty Media is set to add a little more muscle to its entertainment holdings by Q3 2006 when it acquires IDT Entertainment. The Englewood, Colorado-based company that owns stakes in U.S. channels TLC, QVC and the Discovery Channel, will trade its minority share of IDT Corp. and pay US\$186 million in cash to wholly purchase the entertainment division of the New Jersey-based company. It is also assuming approximately US\$36-million in net debt when the transaction goes through. The acquisition will give Liberty the tools to create a catalogue of live-action and animated content for its multi-headed distribution system.

IDT, with subsidiaries that include Vancouver, British Columbia-based CG producer Mainframe Entertainment and Troy, Michigan's home entertainment distributor Anchor Bay Entertainment, is a perfect complement to the company's current holdings, John Orr, VP of Liberty Media, says. "A company like IDT Entertainment has some interesting growth prospects,"

he says, adding the company's animation capability was one of the key reasons driving the acquisition.

Orr is quick to suggest that Liberty subsidiary Starz Entertainment will be the most obvious beneficiary of the new arrangement. Starz will commence a five-year output agreement with IDT Entertainment once the Liberty purchase is finalized. The new deal will give Starz's network of 13 premium television channels, on-demand service and internet movie subscription site access to a pool of content, including animated shorts and a feature movie archive, to draw from after its current distribution setups with Disney and Sony expire.

IDT Entertainment first entered the cartoon arena with its purchase of Film Roman, the animation house behind *The Simpsons* and *King of the Hill* three years ago and has since followed suit by snapping up animation house Digital Production Solutions and securing part ownership



Liberty Media's impending purchase of IDT Entertainment means more content for Starz

in Stan Lee's POW! Entertainment. The company will soon enter the full-length animated feature market with *Everyone's Hero—The Story of Yankee Irving*, scheduled for release in September. At Cannes in May IDT also announced plans to produce US\$40-million animated feature *Sheepish*, scheduled to go into production in 2007. **GR**

## KidScreen Poll Patrol

**What kind of impact do you think Wal-Mart's recent push to eliminate US\$6.5 billion in excess inventory from its distribution network will have on consumer products manufacturers' sales numbers?**

**None: 18.65%**

**Very little: 11.92%**

**Some: 27.98%**

**None: 41.45%**

**Total votes: 193**

## Chinese on-line game market to double by 2010

According to Shanghai, China-based iResearch Consulting Group, the Chinese on-line gaming market has grown at a fast clip over the past few years and the momentum is projected to continue into the next five. According to the report, the market grew by 51% in 2005 to more than US\$760 million and is expected to top US\$970 million by the end of 2006, reaching \$US1.7 billion by 2010. iResearch attributed this to a few factors, including the rise of internet use in China and more aggressive marketing strategies for on-line games.

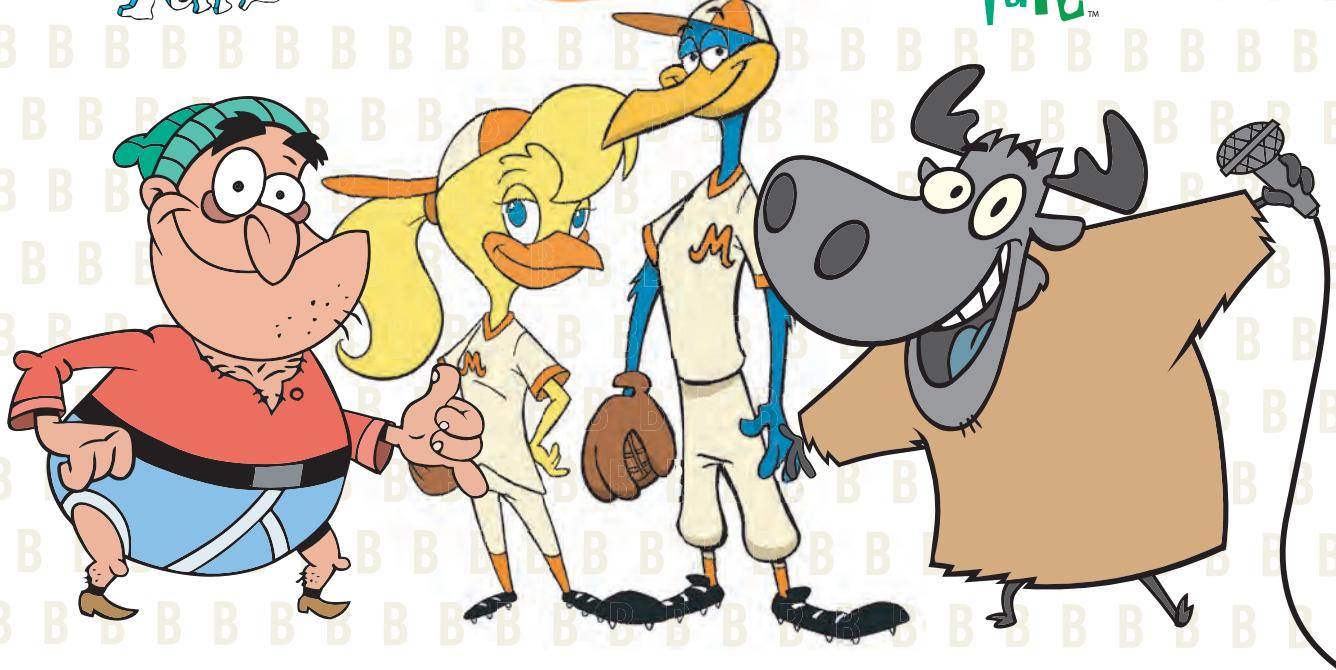
Looking to get in on the action, Disney recently teamed up with Shanghai, China-based Shanda Interactive Entertainment to bring a new on-line game to the Chinese market. Few details are available, but the game will be based on a Disney property and should be ready for beta testing in spring 2007.



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## What's developing in kids production

by Lianne Stewart

### Red Fox gets musical with *Wolfgang*

Generating some interest at this past MIPTV was the new, painterly series *Wolfgang* from London, England's Red Fox Productions. Seven-year-old Wolfgang is a cub who lives with his grandparents in an idyllic lakeside village. Wolfgang discovers a magical flute and each 13-minute episode revolves around his resulting adventures. For example, in one episode called The Growing Competition, the wee wolf cub uses the power of his flute to help his friend create some prize-winning produce. But our hero hasn't yet figured out the instrument's kinks, and the magical spell works all too well. Giant tomato trees soon sprout and overtake the event. Although his friend gets disqualified for crushing the competitors' tent with her giant tomatoes, Wolfgang ultimately doesn't let his pal down. With the aid of his flute, Wolfgang concocts a wonderful dish using her veggies, winning her the tastiest tomatoes prize.

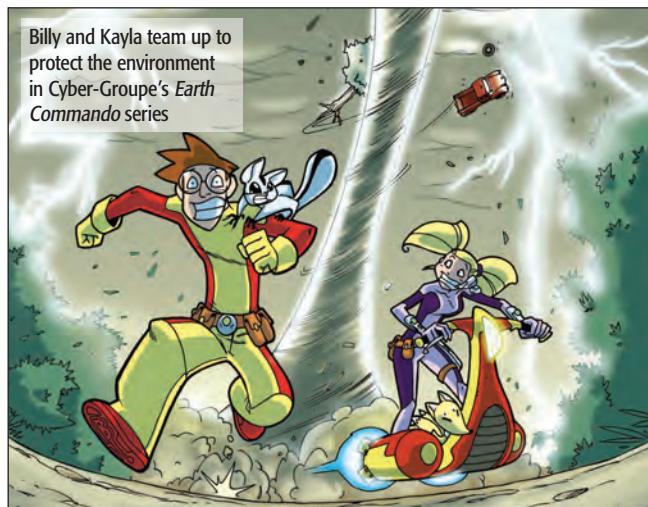
Geared for four-to-seven-year-olds, the 26 episodes are budgeted at approximately US\$4.6 million. The CGI toon, based on the artwork of Hannah Giffard, is currently in development with London, England's Absolute Digital and Paris-based TeamTo, which developed *Rollie Polie Olie*. Canada's TVOntario and Radio-Canada have picked up the presale rights for a potential Q3 2008 debut, and ABC Australia has shown a keen interest.

### Environmental issues get animated

With microphones and notepads in hand, Billy and Kayla are two young reporters on the brink of uncovering environmental villains across the globe. In *Earth Commando*, from Paris, France's Cyber-Groupe Animation, the duo work for TV station World Nature Network and trek through deserts, jungles, ocean and cities to unearth enviro crimes and protect the planet. Scripts are still being hammered out, but some planned storylines include the duo exposing a major international corporation's scheme to cut down the rainforest, pinpointing the cause of an oil spill while assisting in the cleanup efforts,

and tracking down unscrupulous crooks who attempt to take advantage of relief funds.

Budgeted at about US\$7.5 million and targeting the core kid demo of eight-to-12 years old, the producers have a pitch-ready bible and are aiming for a potential Q2 2008 delivery date.



Cyber-Groupe, the production company behind *Ozie-Boo!* is courting French co-production partners for the 2-D/CGI series, and anticipates the team will be pitching European and American presales before the end of the year. Merchandising has been thought out for the series, and part of the profits will be turned over to environmental groups.

### Tons of laughs happen on *Total Drama Island*

London, England's Cake Entertainment and Toronto, Canada's Fresh Animation have teamed up to tap into the success of reality

"Up Next" continued on page 42

# Aussie iTV study tells preschool programmers to toss the narrative

by Lianne Stewart

**A** three-year research study from Perth, Australia's Interactive Television Research Institute (ITRI) at Murdoch University may change the way producers and networks approach preschool programming the world over. Although the university is in the process of releasing the study's results, which examined how interactivity can enhance a five-year-old's experience with preschool programming, some initial findings are certain to raise questions about how the biz currently speaks to the youngest of viewers.

viewers than asking them to click a button to make decisions about the direction of the plot. And games are cheaper than producing choose-your-own-adventure type scenarios.

Professor Duane Varan, the director of ITRI who headed up the research team, says his staff entered this study believing the size of a TV program's budget and bandwidth would correspond with its impact on preschool viewers. ITRI's similar studies on the television-watching habits of adults and older kids had shown engagement with a TV series increased

preschoolers are capable of that same level of abstraction."

The conclusion came after conducting several evaluation phases on interactive-show prototypes. The test field consisted of three existing preschool series—*Dora the Explorer*, *Hi-5*, and *Play School*. Over the course of three years, the team monitored the reactions of 500 five-year-olds, chosen from 21 schools in Perth, as they viewed three different versions of each program. For *Dora*, there was a Haptic version where kids had the option to play a game with the TV remote control, an Incidental in which the preschooler could customize content such as choosing the color of a wagon, and Central, where the protagonist reaches a fork in the road and the child decides which path *Dora* should follow. "There is always a debate whether preschoolers understand structure or whether they need a character to hold onto and carry them through," Varan explains. This research helped the team conclude kids don't understand narrative structure and they indeed need guidance while interacting with their favorite TV program.

Jane Gould, Nickelodeon Australia's director of programming and research, says it wouldn't be responsible for the cablenet to invest in interactive segments for preschoolers without running empirical research. In the past three years, the localized network has ramped up its preschool co-production efforts with its work on *The Upside Down Show* with Sesame Worksop.

Nick Australia entered the study expecting interactive TV's purpose was to provide preschoolers with the opportunity to influence the narrative. But now understanding these young viewers aren't seeking (and don't necessarily benefit from) the option, Gould intends to apply the findings to future initiatives that will lead viewer choice and

*"Aussie iTV" continued on page 46*



This screen shot of *Dora* shows the Haptic interactive option given to hundreds of Aussie preschoolers

One surprising observation from the Children's iTV Project (funded by the Australia Research Council, the West Australian Department of Education, and networks such as Nickelodeon Australia, Nine Network and ABC Australia) indicates the best methods to reach preschoolers were often the least expensive to produce. For example, a peripheral on-screen game played via the television's remote control tends to be a better way to engage and entertain young

when the viewer could direct the show's outcome (*American Idol*, anyone?). But the opposite was the case with preschoolers.

"Most of the compelling applications we found were low cost and low bandwidth, and that was a real surprise," he says, adding choices may be more disruptive to the series' overall flow. "With adults or older kids, a show's structure is mapped out abstractly in your mind and you're able to follow along with the story," Varan says. "But I don't think

## Decode teams with Halifax Film Company to create DHX Media

**D**ecode is gearing up for its 10th anniversary next April in a very public fashion. The Toronto, Canada prodco has joined forces with fellow Canuck house Halifax Film Company, the makers of *Poko* and the Alliance Atlantis-distributed *Lunar Jim*, to create a holding company to be valued on both London's AIM stock market and the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX).



Decode will now distribute HFC's *Poko*

Trading of DHX Media shares began in late May and Neil Court, partner at Decode, says the new company will create a pool of funds large enough to float both HFC and Decode growth. He adds the current environment for growing privately run businesses doesn't leave a lot of cash to expand into new ventures. "You can have a great privately run, organic business, but if you don't have capital, you're kind of stuck," he says.

The Decode team started shopping for capital about a year ago and hired London's KPMG to investigate opportunities on the company's behalf. In the end, Halifax Film Company

stepped into the gap. HFC heads, Michael Donovan and Charles Bishop, have previous experience operating within public companies after having sold Salter Street Films to Toronto, Canada's Alliance Atlantis in 2001.

Donovan, CEO at Halifax Film Group, will head up the day to day work required to raise the capital via DHX, while Decode's Court and fellow partner Steve DeNure will concentrate on production and brand expansion to make the venture appealing to investors.

One new proposed avenue is a push into consumer products. Now that *Franny's Feet* is set to appear on PBS as of July, and Decode has added most of HFC's preschool slate to its international distribution catalogue, M&L seems like it would be a natural extension of the company's brand. It's early days, but Court says DHX will either look to buy a company in that sector or build the division internally with some of its newfound capital. But he warns the company isn't going to make the mistake that some public companies have made in the past and start buying willy-nilly. Rather, each deal will be considered as an augmentation of the organic base Decode has already established.

Another change is the departure of one of Decode's founders, John Delmage. He's returning to work on the creative side and has signed a two-year first-look deal with Decode for his new properties. **LS**

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Profiles in programming strategy

## PBS' preschool network blossoms

The States' first 24-hour preschool net is jazzing up its sked with themed blocks, in-house-hatched interstitials and promotional stunts as it prepares for its first anniversary this September. Launched as a collaborative effort between PBS, Comcast, HIT Entertainment and Sesame Workshop, PBS Kids Sprout now has the potential to reach 20 million households through satellite and digital cable, and its VOD service that went live last April has since racked up more than 80 million views.

While Sprout's slate is primarily made up of series from its partners, including HIT's *Bob the Builder* and *Sesame Street* from The Workshop, senior VP of programming Andrew Beecham is looking to shake things up with original productions. The Sprout library consists of nearly 30 series produced by the three partners, but Beecham says that there is always room for more. Although long-form series are not a priority, he is looking for new content to serve as companion shows to current programming, so producers looking to pitch him should emphasize how their series will complement the Sprout sked.

As 2007 approaches, Beecham is aiming to build on Sprout's slate of short-form programming, and his main priority is finding original fare that's well-suited to a multi-platform approach.

To fill the gap, live-action or animated series ideas should be no longer than five minutes per ep and targeted at boys and girls between two- and five-years-old. Cross-platform rights must also be available. In terms of curriculum, Beecham is seeking out general themes relevant to preschool kids, such as safety, exercise and nutrition.

As for what he's specifically got his heart set on, Beecham isn't picky about gender demos. The current viewer boy/girl split is unclear due to the absence of Nielsen ratings, but he says it's not a huge concern for preschool programming, anyway—and neither is the split between animation and live action. Prospective pitchers need to obtain a submission-release letter from his assistant Maria Weglarz first, and bibles will only be accepted once the letter has been returned. "No e-mail, phone calls or carrier pigeons please," Beecham notes. Pitchers that make it past this stage should send series bibles with curriculum and educational consultants lined up, as well as detailed episode synopses.

In-house production is another priority for the diginet. The live-action segments that frame the episodes featured in Sprout's Goodnight Show evening block have recently been completed, and are slated for broadcast in July. Running every night from



Sprout's Goodnight Show is one of the net's themed programming blocks

six to nine, the block features a live host and her puppet side-kick and aims to help parents get preschoolers ready for bed. The host encourages kids to perform bedtime activities such as washing their faces and brushing their teeth, and Sprout's creative team cherry picks episodes from its current slate that fit the sleepy theme.

Interstitial series are also in the offing. Production is underway for an educational series called *The Many Adventures of Mr. Mailman*, which aims to teach kids about communication and U.S. geography. Mr. Mailman is a wooden figure who uses an old-fashioned puppet theatre as his set and delivers mail across the States. The character originated from Sprout's Birthday Block, a segment that airs around a dozen times a day, where a live host reads kids birthday cards on air. Other interstitials are in production, but Beecham's not ready to divulge details.

The new digital media landscape has certainly become part and parcel of Beecham's interstitial development plans. "Finding clever ways to use our different platforms I think is absolutely key," Beecham says, adding the new content is being tailored to live in different ways on the linear network, VOD and the web.

The newbie net will close the year with the addition of a few new short-form programs, including PBS's *Jakers!* in September, as well as mounting some live-hosted promo stunts for Grandparents' Day and its first anniversary. "We can do a lot of stunting that other networks are unable to do," Beecham says. "If there's a theme, there's a stunt for it." **DW**



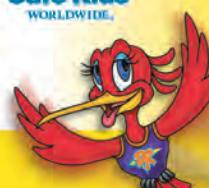
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\*Nielsen data from PTV airing 12/05 and Comcast VOD Jan/Feb 2006.

# The Beeb gets stuck on Jam Media's *Tales*

**W**hen Brit pubcaster BBC sent a representative from only its Worldwide division to last year's Cartoon Forum in Kolding, Denmark, many Euro producers believed they'd have to look elsewhere for a U.K. commission. But Dublin, Ireland's Jam Media, which closed the event with a presentation of its 13 x 11-minute *Twisted Tales* series, managed to scoop a potential deal with the Beeb. At press time, the ink was just about to dry on a U.K.-exclusive contract for the tween-targeted, 2-D series. Once it's signed, the laughter is tentatively slated for a September 2007 launch.

Jam's John Rice and Alan Shannon headed back to the U.K. and used their Kolding-perfected pitch on BBC's Michael Carrington. The series takes traditional fairy tales and mixes them up with modern humor and lots of punny action. But what makes the show unique is Jam's real-kid approach. Viewers will be invited to submit four headshots to the show's website showing themselves with happy, sad, surprised and angry faces. The Irish toonhouse then

takes the images and incorporates the viewers directly into the show, making the kids the star.

Calling it 360-degree programming, the BBC will search for potential series' stars via a link on its website. Carrington points to the program's interactive features as its key selling point. The Beeb's audience will see itself on screen and the pubcaster will be able to connect with its members on-line. "What better way to engage with our audience?" he says.

Rice says Jam will be working with the BBC to ensure the on-line component runs smoothly. Links to a *Twisted Tales* site should start popping up on the pubcaster's website next summer as the production team will need approximately three months to collect viewer headshots and incorporate them into the animated series.

Jam is looking to court further presales on the format from networks in Germany, the U.S., Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, Spain,



Jam Media's tween-targeted *Twisted Tales* makes the audience the real stars

and Australia. But Rice says he's holding off on arranging these meetings until the pilot is completed, which he reckons will be in time for MIPCOM Jr. In the meantime, Rice is in advanced L&M discussions with a yet-to-be-named company in the U.K. for both *Twisted Tales* and similar-concept preschool series, *Picme*, which was snapped up by Ireland's RTE and Nick Jr. in the U.K. last year. **LS**

Program	Broadcaster	Style/Format	Demo	Producer/Distributor
6Teen	Nicktoons Networks	mixed media/52 x half hours	tweens	Nelvana
Caillou	Super RTL	2-D/20 x half hours	preschool	Cookie Jar Entertainment
I'm an Animal	Nickelodeon UK	2-D/52 x two minutes	preschool	Monster Distributes
Dougie in Disguise	Nickelodeon Latin America	2-D/104 x seven minutes	preschool	Neptuno Films
Guess with Jess	BBC	CGI/52 x 10 minutes	preschool	Entertainment Rights
Legend of the Dragon	Jetix U.S.	2-D/39 x half hours	eight to 12	BKN International
Lunar Jim	France 5	stop-motion/26 x 30 minutes	preschool	Alliance Atlantis International
Planet Sketch	Jetix Europe France 3 Nickelodeon France	CGI/13 x 11 minutes	seven to 11	Decode Entertainment and Aardman Animation
Pocoyo	Nickelodeon France	CGI/52 x seven minutes	preschool	Granada International and Zinkia Entertainment
Willa's Wild Life	Discovery Kids	2-D/52 x 11 minutes	preschool	Nelvana

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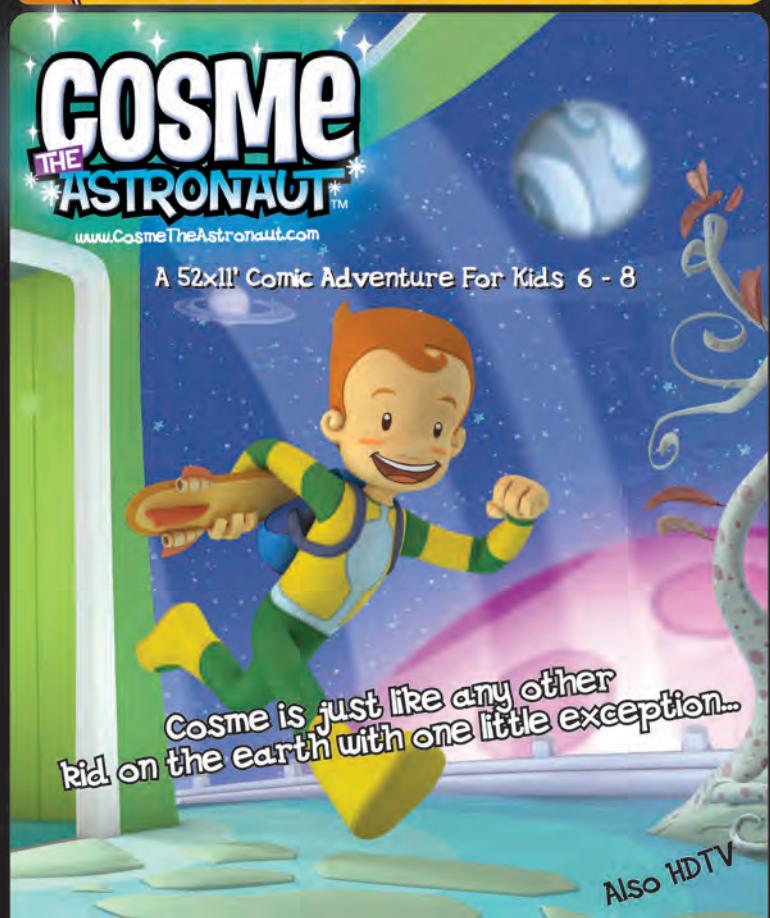
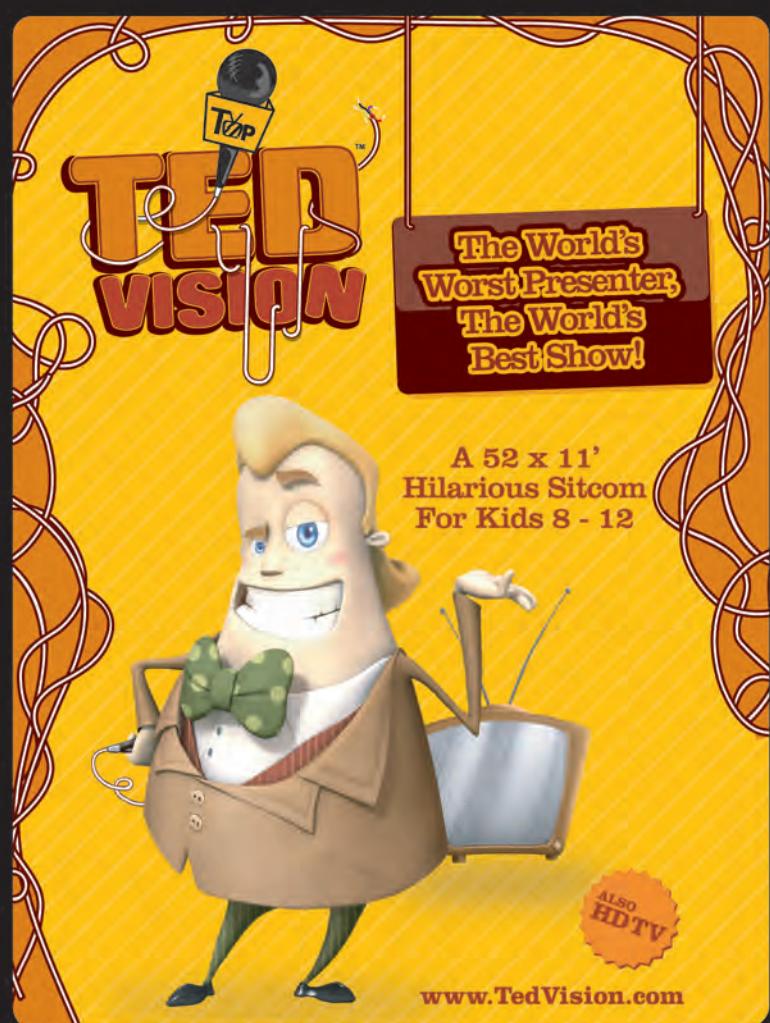
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ppd

"Up Next" continued from page 35



Survivor meets *Lost* on the wacky animated series *Total Drama Island*

series *Survivor* and *The Amazing Race*. *Total Drama Island* focuses on a group of 22 city-based teenagers who rough it out on a remote island. The episodes are filled with hilarious hijinks to get the tween set laughing. In one ep a character named Izzy jokingly dresses up as a bear and inadvertently attracts the attention of a very-real grizzly to the campsite, leaving the group to work together and find ways to distract the love-struck bear from their goofy pal.

The US\$6.5-million series is already in production for presale partner, Canada's Teletoon. Cake Entertainment will be fishing for further presales in the U.K., France, the States and in Germany. 26 episodes of the Flash-animated series are planned for an early 2007 delivery date.

### Chugging into early childhood programming

With the advent of baby-targeted satellite TV nets popping up across the globe, New York's Honest Entertainment is looking to fill these schedules with *World of Oo*. Targeted to children as young as six months, the curious characters in each episode use music and socialization to learn about everyday things around them. In one gently-paced episode, four adventurous spiders are drawn to the unusual sights and sounds of a circus. Using tactics such as repetition and visual cues to engage the young viewers, the arachnids ride with a clown on a tightrope, soar on a trapeze, and hilariously dance on drums to create their own music.



*World of Oo* offers fun for the baby set

Honest anticipates a spring 2007 delivery date for this series, budgeted at approximately US\$250,000 per half hour episode. The team has signed up New York's Xoop to animate its 2-D and CGI mixed 26 half hours, and Honest is trolling to the usual markets for presale partners from North America and Europe. ■

# Harry and Bucket Full of Dinosaurs

On Shelf  
August 2006!



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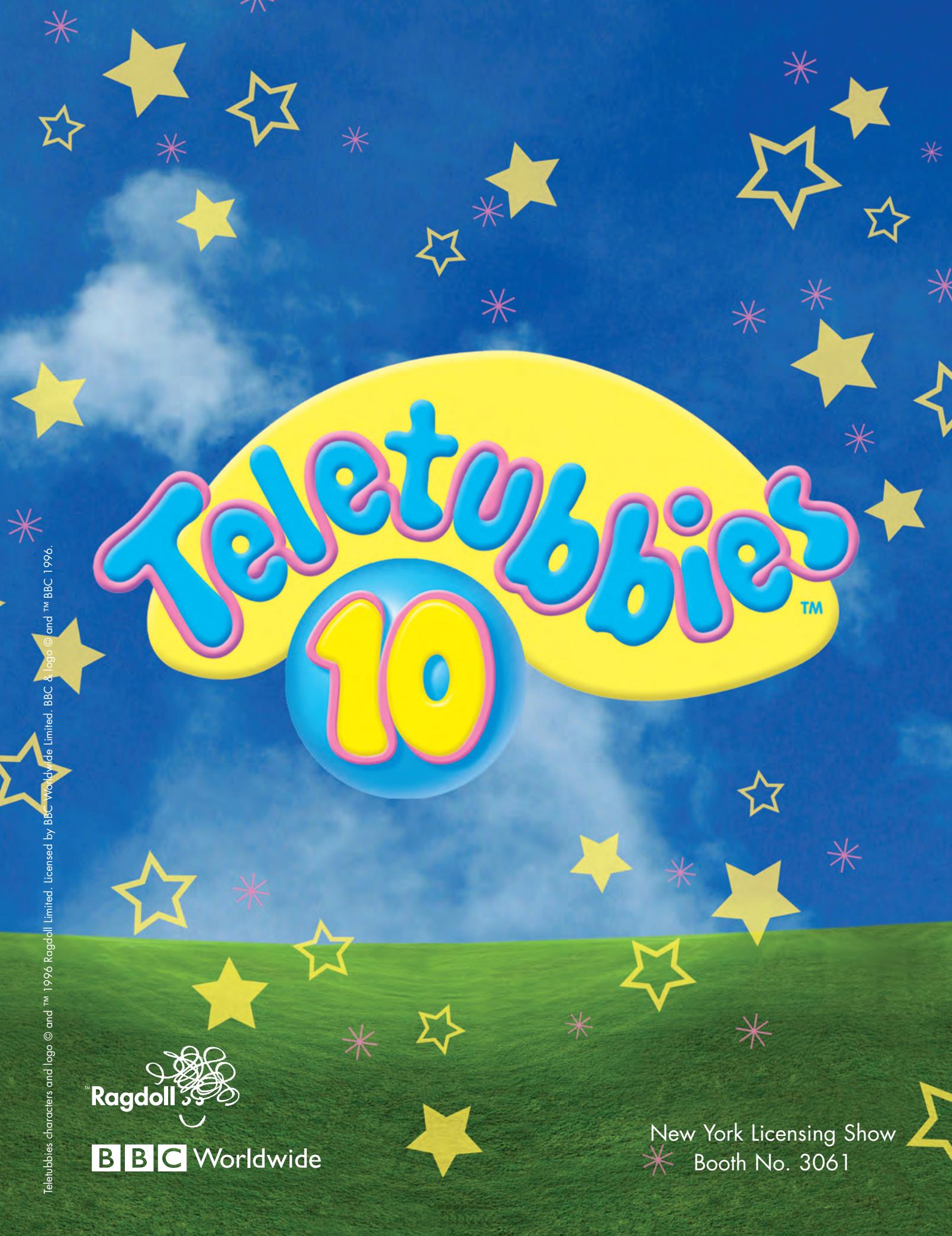


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*"Aussie iTV" continued from page 36*  
 characters who hold the preschooler's hand along the way.

Lynley Marshall, director of ABC New Media & Digital Services, and Gabrielle Shaw, a research analyst for the pubcaster, say the results were also surprising in light of the childhood obesity epidemic. Despite the belief that watching TV goes hand-in-hand with inactivity, the study found typical kid couch potatoes notably increased their physical movement as they became engaged with an interactive TV program. The pubcaster anticipates the results will help guide future programming initiatives for preschoolers not only for its linear channel, but for the 35 hours of kids shows it broadcasts weekly on its free-to-air digital channel, ABC2.

Varan warns, however, that interactive TV doesn't always produce these kinds of results. "It doesn't inherently weave magic. Rather, it enables something—and that can be positive, negative or have no effect whatsoever," he says. And now that the infrastructure is set up to conduct further research, Varan contends more projects studying this style of programming will start up in the region. For Children's iTV, the ITRI team not only created a portable lab to travel to and from Perth's public and private



ITRI anticipates this portable lab, created especially for the Children's iTV study, will be used in future school-based research studies about how media affects kids

schools, they also developed equipment to view respondents in their homes.

The mobile unit, which ventured out to schools every day for a year, included two living rooms with an observation area in the center. The in-house, qualitative phase was conducted in 10 homes. A small video recording system dubbed Little Brother was installed in living rooms and enabled the research team to watch the kids in their natural habitat for a week. It also opened the door to observing co-viewing opportunities prompted by interactive preschool programming. This was particularly relevant during Haptic-style phases when there was more than one kid vying to play an

interactive game using the single television remote control.

ITRI's findings are all the more pertinent to the business given that more preschoolers appear to be hooked to the tube. In the States, for example, Manlo Park, California's Kaiser Family Foundation released its *Electronic Media in the Lives of Infants, Toddlers, Preschoolers and their Parents* report last May. Conducted via a random telephone survey of 1,051 parents with kids ages six months to six years, it showed one-third of all U.S. kids in the demo have TVs in their bedrooms—19% are under the age of one; 29% fall into the two to three year old bracket and four-to-six-years-olds make up 43% of the group. ■

## News in Brief

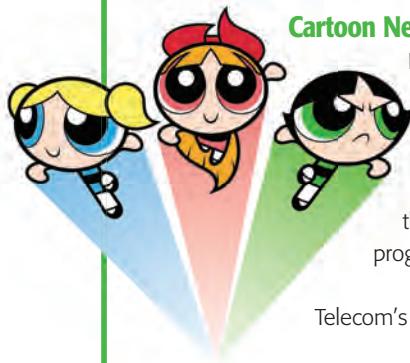
### Kiwis get a taste of their own Nickelodeon

Although Nickelodeon has been in New Zealand homes via a pan-regional Nick Asia feed, Kiwi country is getting its very own channel in August. Nickelodeon New Zealand plans to deliver homegrown content and locally hosted segments alongside signature shows such as *SpongeBob SquarePants* and *Dora the Explorer*. Programming sked details are under wraps for the time being, but viewers can expect the same mix of toons, live-action, preschool and game show fare found on its sister nets. Satellite operator Sky will carry the new MTV Networks Asia Pacific subsidiary, making it available to 43% of the country's TVs, or roughly 650,000 Kiwi households.

### Cartoon Network turns up the voltage on VOD

In an effort to make channel navigation easier, Cartoon Network is re-launching its U.K. Homechoice video-on-demand service. To access the newly minted Cartoon Network Now, customers will be required to kick in an extra US\$11 per month to subscribe to the children's package. VOD content will be updated on a daily basis and include CN archival classics such as *The Powerpuff Girls* along with a handful of new series including *My Gym Partner is a Monkey* and *Ben 10*. The navigability of the channel has been improved with a new green-button menu designed to help kids find their favorite programs without needing mom or dad's help.

CN Now is currently available on Homechoice channel 310 and will soon be available on British Telecom's broadband channel, BT Vision.



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**Dora the Explorer**  
was the #2 license  
in France last year



## A baby boomerlet and alternative retail opps are driving licenses to new heights in the territory

region that the market is growing.

It was certainly a good year for the key kid category of licensed toys. Year-end sales data from industry researcher The NPD Group shows 2005 toy sales increased by 6.2% to rack up US\$2.3-billion in revenues. Moreover, bolstered by the likes of Dora the Explorer and the Star Wars franchise, sales of licensed toys shot up 18.2% and now account for 23.4% of the entire market—that figure stood at 20% three years ago.

The mix of hot licenses and a relatively healthy specialty toy retail market seems to be driving the up tick. Make no mistake—France's retail scene is as sophisticated as any in the world and the

**IT** looks like France's US\$5-billion-plus licensing market may just be coming into its own. In the last decade, licensing activity in France has grown steadily to make it the second-largest European market behind the U.K. And unlike its historic rival across the Channel, France's retail landscape has yet to become quite as overcrowded and competitive, and there's something of a baby boomerlet occurring right now. (France's birthrate is higher than most of its Euro counterparts.) Not to say that launching a new kids property is a cakewalk, but there is a sense among licensors and agents working in the

country is home to the world's second-largest retailer, Carrefour. In fact, sales at its some 3,500 French outlets (including 216 super-sized hypermarkets) generated US\$46 billion in revenues, while the number-two mass merchant Auchan (with 120 hypermarkets and 287 supermarkets) raked in US\$18.6 billion. And both are major players in licensed goods.

Unlike the States, where Wal-Mart and Target have taken over toy sales and specialty store numbers continue to dwindle, the ranks of dedicated toy retailers in France are swelling. NPD estimates show more than 400 outlets have popped up on the scene in the last five years, and sales growth at specialty outstripped that of hypermarket competitors in 2005. The specialists chalked up an 8.2% increase in value of sold goods versus the 5% garnered by their gargantuan competitors. Laurent Taieb, director of consumer products in France for Nickelodeon & Viacom Consumer Products Europe, notes the growing specialty chains including The Ludendo Group (La Grand Récré, StarJouet) and King Jouet now have the clout to ask for exclusive, dedicated product from licensees. In other words, he says, these retailers are helping to boost the market for merch by continually adding new products that aren't available at mass retail.

Jean-Phillipe Randisi, VP and MD of Nickelodeon & Viacom Consumer Products Europe, believes consumers may be getting frustrated by the product offering available at mass retailers. "The low-price points at the hypermarkets aren't something consumers are buying into any more," he says. "They're less convinced that they're getting quality."

Stores such as La Grande Récré are actively mounting retail-ainment-type events, supporting licenses with corner merch and

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by *Lana Castleman*

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\* Source: Nielsen Media Research, NPOWER, qualified audience on Disney Channel, 12/26/05 - 3/26/06

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# Kids and Press Love The Doodlebops

# The Doodlebops

Doodlebops ready to rock

## Falco lends a hand for fundraiser

NEW YORK — On Saturday, *The Sopranos'* Edie Falco staffed a booth at her first Kids for Kids Family Carnival, which benefits the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation.

She posed for pictures with little kids and had her toddler son, Anderson, play with them. "I had no idea it was such a big thing, and such a great thing. So many kids!" Falco said.

As for Anderson, who clutched a toy in his hand and stared wide-eyed at the hustle and bustle around him: "He's a little overwhelmed," said Falco, who then wheeled him around so he could check out some of the other booths at the fundraiser.

By Donna Freydkin



Clowning around: Edie Falco with Rooney, left, Deedee and Moe of The Doodlebops, a kids' band with a Disney Channel show.

...and then the accent. We go to the song. It is a true rock band. And it's for the kids. They are really involved. They're up and dancing. It's in the air.

—Edie Falco, Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation

CONCERT REVIEW  
FALL OUT  
WITH THE DOODLEBOPS

COVER STORY

E-TODAY

keep bonpin' along

have a bit of fun

ert tour and movie

out

now

rock

"Licensing Show" continued from page 26

## All hail *Shrek the Third*

While DreamWorks Animation will be talking up *Bee Movie*, an original CGI film slated for Q4 '07, the bigger focus will be the third installment of the mighty *Shrek* film franchise. Rick Rekedal, head of licensing and retail marketing, says the program's demo and distribution for *Shrek the Third* is going broad. Mass-market, toy, grocery and drug retailers should be awash in merch sporting the likeness of his giant greenness come summer 2007. Van Nuys, California-based MGA snagged the master toy license earlier this year and is working on a lineup of action figures, fashion dolls, plush, board games, animatronics and room décor to roll out in tandem with the sequel's release. Meanwhile, Rekedal says he's actively seeking licensees in all other categories right now.



DreamWorks is planning a giant program for the gigantic green one

## Springfield gets ready for its close-up

Rumored for some time, it looks like *The Simpsons Movie* is making its way to the multiplex next summer and Twentieth Century Fox Licensing & Merchandising is planning a Homer-sized merch program. Plot details are under wraps at the moment but you can expect the series regulars to spend 90 minutes or so riffing on pop culture in their first theatrical outing. At the show, Fox will be unveiling a broad program targeting adult and kid fans in key categories including toys, apparel and food & beverage. The property's 600-plus licensees will likely get a crack at the action.

## Ovadia plans to pin licensees for the three-count

In his second Licensing Show outing under his own shingle, Al Ovadia, CEO of Al Ovadia & Associates, is looking to lock down deals for New York-based Animation Collective's new

series of shorts, *The Thumb Wrestling Federation*. It's a spoof on pro wrestling with knock-down, drag-'em-out bouts between feisty (and sometimes downright evil) thumbs. The show was slotted into Nicktoon's Monday night sked this spring, and after two weeks on air, the net picked up a second season with some



When two thumbs go to war, a licensing program is what Ovadia's hoping to score weekend bouts. Devout fans can also catch up on the action at [nicktoons.com](http://nicktoons.com).

The planned merch program is aimed squarely at the boys seven to 14 demo, but Ovadia says the property has reach and is garnering interest from the college-age crowd as well. He's currently aiming for a 2007 specialty/mid-tier merch launch, with trading cards, publishing (think the official rulebook) and back-to-school categories in the poll position. Right now, "TWF is wide open" on the licensee front, he says.

## Monster Warriors and space marshals invade Jetix

Jetix Consumer Products moves into Javits with two new properties in tow. *Monster Warriors* (a 26 x half hour co-pro with Canada's Coneybeare Stories) is currently rolling out across Jetix Europe's channels and Canuck broadcaster YTV. While Toronto, Canada-based Bejuba! Entertainment is taking care of North America, JCP holds European rights to the live-action fantasy series about a teenage gang of makeshift monster fighters who battle B-movie inspired creatures. Sizing up potential master toy licensees and promotional partners is top priority for Richard Woolf, director of international licensing. He's also looking to fill publishing, interactive, mobile gaming, apparel, accessories, and stationery categories for the core kid-targeted program.

JCP, and Paris, France-Based prodhouse Marathon is establishing the foundation for a broad, mass-market European program for new toon *Team Galaxy*. The action/adventure comedy aimed at the six to 11 set will hit Jetix Euro, YTV in Canada and Cartoon Network U.S. this fall. Marathon and North American agent MGM Consumer Products will be announcing a global master toy partner at the show, and Woolf will be on the lookout for home entertainment, games, stationery and apparel licensees.

Product could roll out as early as spring 2007, but the primary push will be during the back-to-school sales season.

## Feature films top WBCP slate

With *Superman Returns* set to fly into theatres at the end of the month, Warner Bros. Consumer Products is turning its attention to its upcoming crop of feature films. CGI-animated *Happy Feet* will be at the show with Thinkway Toys (toys), Hallmark (stationery) and Penguin (publishing) onboard. The program for *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, the fifth installment of the series about everyone's favorite boy wizard, continues to shape up. The merch is geared at the core-kid and tween set and WBCP executive VP of domestic licensing and worldwide marketing Karen McTier says deals for collectibles & gifts, games, stationery, apparel and accessories should be finalized at the show.

Finally, Warner Bros. has picked up film and merch rights for *Where the Wild Things Are*, a CGI/live-action film version of Maurice Sendak's 338-word classic children's book slated for a 2008 release. McTier says the supporting products will primarily cater to the tastes of three- to eight-year-olds, while a secondary push for adult merch is in the works to capitalize on nostalgia for the book. Right now McTier and her team are on the lookout for apparel, collectibles and gift licensees.

Expect WBCP to be touting new small screen toons from Kids' WB!, which are set to bow on the WB/UPN hybrid net The CW this fall. *Legion of Super Heroes*, based on DC Comics hero Superman, *Monster Allergy* from Italy's Rainbow and *Shaggy & Scooby-Doo Get a Clue!* lead the pack.

## Elmo and the gang make room for *Pinky Dinky Doo*

Gund is onboard as master toy & gift licensee, so Sesame Workshop is set to propel *Pinky Dinky Doo* into the consumer products spotlight. The animated series, produced with New York's Cartoon Pizza, debuted this spring on Noggin in the U.S. and garnered a berth on Canadian pubcaster CBC. Maura Regan, executive VP and GM of global licensing, says the preschool audience so far is split 50/50 boy/girl, but the plan is to position the gentle series as a girl's property in the merch realm.

Gund recently started a girl's division and Regan says it fits well with the Workshop's strategy to target girls between the ages of two and five. Figuring out what attracts older preschoolers can be the challenge, she says. "They want to be big... but

they're still little kids." Gund's currently working on a line of toys and accessories including plush, fuzzy notebooks and cute novelty pens for a 2007 launch at retail. Meanwhile, Regan and her team are on the hunt for board games, stationery, party goods, apparel, and accessories licensees to augment the program.

## SamSam swoops in on Taffy

Taffy Entertainment, the distribution and brand management arm of California's Mike Young Productions and Paris-based MoonScoop, will introduce its new 3-D preschool superhero SamSam to North America. The high-def, CGI series of the same name is based on a decade-old French comic book character who readily jumps into his SamSaucer to fight monsters that represent his childhood fears. Toronto, Canada's Spin Master has already scooped up the North American and U.K. toy rights and will go out with action figures, plush, role-play, activity toys and foam furniture for the four to six set after the series' planned 2007 delivery. Axel Dauchez, CEO of MoonScoop Group, says he's looking for video game and publishing licensees to complement the Spin Master lineup.



Spin Master is already onboard as North American master toy licensee for SamSam

## New Line delves deeper into kid-centric fantasy worlds

While *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy is a tough act to follow, New Line is hoping the addition of several kid-friendly fantasy films to its portfolio will weave merch magic that Frodo and friends continue to enjoy. Accompanying last year's debutante *The Golden Compass* (the 2007 film based on the first novel of the bestselling Phillip Pullman series), is *Inkheart*.

The studio is producing a live-action/CGI version for a 2008 release inspired by Cornelia Funke's popular middle-school novel about a girl whose father has the ability to make fantastical characters leap from the storybook page and into real life. David Imhoff, senior executive VP of worldwide licensing and merchandising, says he's introducing the property at the show to lure long-lead licensees, including interactive and toys. He adds games (electronic, board and trading card) is going to be the driving category.

Meanwhile both New Line, which holds international rights, and North American licensor Scholastic Entertainment are continuing to build the tween- and adult fan-targeted *Golden Compass* program. Imhoff says the pair is close to announcing global interactive and toy licensees, and Scholastic is on the lookout at the show for collectibles, apparel, accessories, domestics, social expressions, stationery and novelty licensees.

Imhoff will also be teasing the remake of Jules Verne's *Journey to the Center of the Earth*. The film is being produced with Walden Media, and Lucasfilm's Industrial Light & Magic is onboard for special effects.

### Nickelodeon opens up for innovators

Lest you think Nickelodeon & Viacom Consumer Products' partner slate is full, president Leigh Anne Brodsky says she finds the show is usually an excellent opportunity to take meetings with licensees sporting new products and ideas. "We're always open to exploring new categories and product that could be breakthrough," she says. On the Nick side, her team's priority will be rounding out the programs for boy-skewing *Avatar*, and preschool hits *Go, Diego, Go!* and *The Backyardigans*, which all debuted on Nick airwaves last year.

In terms of up and coming properties, New York-based Little Airplane Productions' operatic preschool series *WonderPets* should get potential licensing and retail partners talking. The show, about super heroes Linny, Tuck and Ming Ming saving endangered baby animals all over the world, debuted this past spring. Following Nick's long-standing practice of giving new shows time to build



a following before licensing them, product won't hit shelves until sometime in 2008—providing it with a little more time to hammer out the licensing strategy.

### Sony's going on a surfing safari

Sony Pictures Consumer Products made a splash at Toy Fair with upcoming Sony Pictures Animation's *Surf's Up* and now senior VP of consumer products Juli Boylan is looking to fill out the

program for the CGI film. The ink is drying on a master toy deal that should be announced at the show and merch is scheduled to launch in spring 2007, just a few weeks before the mockumentary-style toon about the surfing circuit hits theaters. Licensees



Nick's introducing the operatic *WonderPets* (left) to prospective partners, and Sony's looking to score more licensees for mockumentary toon *Surf's Up* (top)

for housewares, gift & novelty, apparel, and accessories categories are in Boylan's crosshairs now.

### King Features wants to SeeMore partners

King Features Syndicate, home of spinach-munching sailor Popeye, has added SeeMore the Safety Seal to its roster. The *SeeMore's Playhouse* protagonist aims to teach kids ages two to six about playing it safe and leading a healthy lifestyle. Blending puppetry with live action and animation, the series has been picked up by American Public Television for domestic TV distribution, with plans to roll the series out to public stations starting in September. Products for toddlers and their parents that reinforce the show's messages will form the heart of the program. The company is on the hunt for toy manufacturers that create educational products focused on child development. Nisreen Shocair, director of marketing, says she's hoping to augment the program with publishing, interactive software and games, food & beverage, footwear, and health & wellness licensees. Product is expected to launch at specialty retailers in 2007 before moving to mass. ■

"France" continued from page 49

## Population and media usage

Population	60.8 million
Children 0 to 14	11.1 million
People 15 to 64	49.7 million
Birth rate	11.99 births/1,000
GDP per capita	US\$29,900
TV broadcast stations	584
Internet users	26.2 million
TVs	34.8 million
Radios	55.3 million
Cell phones	44.5 million
Telephone landlines	33.8 million

Source: CIA World Fact Book 2005

POP displays. And most importantly, notes Nelvana's European VP of licensing & marketing Marie-Laure Marchand, these stores sell year-round. "It makes a big difference for us," she says. "Hypermarkets are only in the game at Christmas time."

That said, the likes of Auchan and Carrefour are hardly sitting idly by when it comes to licensed kids product. Carrefour has two people dedicated to handling licensing, while Auchan has one exec heading up the category. And with these larger retailers, putting a property on shelf has to be made as easy as possible. Sandra Vauchier-Cellier, senior VP of international licensing at 4Kids Entertainment, says licensors and their licensees pretty much have to present a shelf-ready package with product and planned promos in tow to the prospective retailer.

Nick's Taieb, for one, has noticed that even the big boys are opening up more to licenses. Competition is tight and regulations that prohibit retailers from advertising on TV make getting the word out more difficult. (In this respect, store catalogues have become the most important advertising vehicle. Auchan's alone has a 15-million copy print run and landing the cover or a dedicated page is quite a coup for any property.) So, he says, the retailers are looking to inject more life into their store environments.

Timed with French broadcaster TF1's tentpole programming stunt this past April, Dora the Explorer hit the road visiting Auchan outlets across the country. "Retailers want to get their stores animated," Taieb says. "They want to tell people they're coming in for a shopping experience and not just to get the best price."

As for what kinds of kids licenses are getting play on shelf right now, a look at NPD's top-10 list from 2005 contains a number of international heavy-hitters (see chart below). In fact, the sole property that originated in France is talent-search sensation Star Academy, whose merch has been making waves in the territory's stores since 2003.

And TV remains an important driver. There's been an influx of cable and satellite channels in the last five years, but as Marina Narishkin, MD at CPLG France, explains the country's two million cable-enabled households don't deliver a big enough audience to sustain a licensing program. On the other hand, the small cabsat viewer numbers mean less audience fragmentation and, therefore, landing a slot on major terrestrials such as TF1 and Canal Plus can help a property achieve significant impact—as witnessed by Dora-mania sweeping through the French preschool set.

Like most Western markets, the key kids categories remain toys, publishing, video games and apparel. Royalty rates are on par as well, running between 8% and 12% to 5% for food & beverage, and

for major categories and from 2% to 5% for food & beverage, and promo categories.

## Top 10 licenses in 2005

1. Winnie the Pooh
2. Dora the Explorer
3. Star Wars
4. Spiderman
5. Noddy
6. Disney Princess
7. Star Academy
8. Strawberry Shortcake
9. Power Rangers
10. Winx

Source: NPD French EPoS panel, 69% market coverage



Iconic French character Babar celebrates his 75th year at toy shops nationwide

French parents, it should be noted, are also very design oriented, making it possible to find success with non-TV driven licenses, too. Narishkin says CPLG is positioning Strawberry Shortcake as a toy and design proposition. While she says the property has only achieved about 20% of its potential in the country, Strawberry's wholesome persona and softly hued products have propelled it into the top 10 list of kids licenses.

Similarly, Marchand says classic French character Babar is known for his style as much as his media incarnations. And Nelvana has embarked on a year-long celebration of the famous elephant's 75th birthday, mounting several large-scale promos in the process. For example, at month's end a deal with the Ministry of Ecology will see 500,000 guidebooks featuring Babar teaching kids about conservation and recycling distributed to families via highway toll booths and national parks. Additionally, 17-million national postal stamps released this year will sport the pachyderm's mug. ■



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# MERCH MAKEOVER MADNESS

## KB TOYS REBUILDS WITH NEW PRODUCT AND ATTITUDE

**With new store openings and hot licensed merch on shelf, the mall-based toy retailer has risen from bankruptcy with panache**

news for toycos is it's done a 180. Infusing its remodeled stores with the latest and greatest product has become a top priority for the once-beleaguered retailer.

After Prentice Capital came to the rescue with a US\$20-million injection of cash in 2005, the company emerged with just over 600 stores from its once 1,300-strong outlet lineup. Former Toys 'R' US president Greg Staley took over as CEO last August, and to date 11 stores have been renovated. Moreover, an opening in Atlantic City last month marked the addition of KB's first new store in the past three years.

Ernie Speranza, KB's chief marketing officer, says the stores are being updated with more open spaces and bright lighting, and adds the old KB locations were not very well arranged. "You almost had to hire a Sherpa guide to take you

**N**ot one to say uncle, the new management team at KB Toys has been busy opening remodeled stores over the past two months, and rebuilding the mall-based chain that went into bankruptcy in 2004. The Pittsfield, Massachusetts-based toy retailer traditionally specialized in selling close-out items, while putting little emphasis on stocking hot new toys. The good

over the mountain of toys that they would stack up in front of the store," he explains.

The revamped outlets will also be outfitted with TV monitors that broadcast commercials and new product demos. Placed at kid-eye level, the TVs are meant to showcase promotional merch that doesn't have an allotted "Try Me" space in-store. Speranza says it's an attempt to make the toy experience more interactive because kids need to understand what a toy does before they really want to buy it.

The creation of new merchandising planograms, with a focus on accommodating more first-run product, lies at the heart of the store renos. The remodeled stores are arranged to encompass five major sections, or strike points, to highlight the new addition of licensed product. The first two strike points are located at either side of the store entrance, with special displays, signage and TV screens for new licensed-character SKUs such as Dora the Explorer items. Two similar strike points are positioned in the middle of the store, with the remaining one in the back dedicated to Fisher-Price products.

Finally, KB is increasing the number of staff hours and putting the floor-level sales team through a more rigorous training program to build its product knowledge and encourage customer interaction, and therefore, loyalty.

Speranza says it is too soon to determine how well the new stores are doing compared to the old ones, but there are plans to renovate 60 or so additional KB locations by the end of the year, with the remaining spaces undergoing conversion in the next few years. Plans are also in the works to open approximately 15 new shops by the end of 2006. ■

by dan waldman

# Toycos sweeten up the candy category with edible playthings

by dan waldman

**T**his Q3, kids will have more reasons to play with their food as toycos set about spiffing up their lines of confection/toy hybrids. Candy isn't a new domain for toy manufacturers, but revamped, season-neutral category offerings may take a bite out of the US\$28-billion States-side confectionary market and offset the current sales slump in the US\$20-billion toy industry.

Despite current concerns surrounding the childhood obesity epidemic in the U.S., the National Confectioners Association says confectionary sales are growing at a steady rate. According to NCA stats, retail sales of confection products in the U.S. grew by almost 2% in 2005, and a 2.3% increase has been projected for 2006. Certainly, Toronto, Canada-based Dynatech Action and Funrise in Woodland Hills, California are looking to grab a slice of this multi-billion dollar pie by moving into the realm of food-based toys.

Dynatech's new Edibles toy line is geared to boys and fuses two faves—hard candy and action figures. The toyco uses a patented process to craft figures with moveable limbs, torsos and heads from the translucent sweet stuff. Not surprisingly, Dynatech has licensed Marvel perennials Spiderman, The Incredible Hulk, Wolverine and The Thing for an initial product launch in Q3 this year.

According to Dynatech president and CEO Brad Pedersen, the new line of confection toys grew out of a need to make playthings with year-round appeal. "Traditional toys have become very seasonal," Pedersen says. And he thinks confection toys' low

price point can help buck this trend. Ringing in at approximately US\$4.99 a pop, he expects kids will spring for more than one Edibles at a time.

Dynatech is looking to grab a piece of the multi-billion dollar confection market with its new line of candy based action figures



Fizzheads holds similar promise for Pedersen. The new toy/candy hybrid line makes water sweet and colorful by using a straw with a specialized dispenser that resembles the

head of an action figure. Kids can drop in an effervescent tablet, watch it bobble and fizz, and then drink the resulting mixture. Like Edibles, Fizzheads is slated to hit mass retail this fall sporting characters culled from the Marvel universe. For US\$2.99, Fizzheads comes with four tablets, the straw and dispenser. Packs of four additional tabs cost US\$1.99. The toyco plans to add to the license roster and Pedersen says his team is currently scouting for properties with both boy and girl appeal.

Funrise Toys has also gotten in on the act by reinventing a '90s hit. Dr. Dreadful Candy Lab was introduced to the North American toy market by Tyco in 1994. By the time the line was discontinued in 1996 (when Mattel absorbed Tyco), more than 150 million units had found their way to North American kids. The toy functioned like a mock laboratory, where kids could make disgusting-looking candy with different sets of ingredients.

Funrise revived Dr. Dreadful last fall and Susan Spiegel, VP of marketing, says it has since sold out in the U.S., Canada and Australia. There are three new Dr. Dreadful products due out this fall, two food labs and a drink maker.

In the current climate, it's quite possible that sugar-based toys might rouse protest from parents concerned about childhood obesity and health. "We're sensitive to that," Pedersen says, adding he is looking into sugar-free variations of Dynatech's confectionary toys. Meanwhile, Cristy Collins, director of product development at Funrise, is taking a similar line. "The reality is that we're dealing with sugar-based products. But there are things we can do, such as fortification with vitamins and looking for ways to cut the sugar down." She hopes to introduce a more nutritional version of Dr. Dreadful by 2008. ■

# Girls get a Wicked retailer

With on-line shopping sales experiencing annual double-digit growth in the last few years, it looks like new girl-targeted e-tailer WickedCoolGirls (wickedcoolgirls.com) may be joining the party at just the right time. According to the 2005 Goldman Sachs, Nielsen//NetRatings and Harris Interactive eSpending Report, e-tail sales in tween-girl friendly categories such as apparel and consumer electronics shot up 42% and 126%, respectively. And thanks to Brett Dewey, CEO and founder of vintage on-line retailer WickedCoolStuff (wickedcoolstuff.com), girls have a new destination to find the hippest merch out there.

WickedCoolGirls is Dewey's response to surveys conducted last year via WickedCoolStuff that suggested the site predominantly appealed to boys and young men. The new e-tailer has a decidedly feminine look, with soft colors and squirley fonts, and focuses on stocking fashionable apparel and accessories, including Care Bears and Barbie merch.

The approach is paying off so far, as traffic's picking up. Just eight weeks since its launch the site is logging 120,000 hits a month. And while it's too early to say which category is the runaway winner, Dewey says the t-shirts are leading the way in sales. The current top-seller is a pink Superman t-shirt (US\$18.95), with a Care Bears

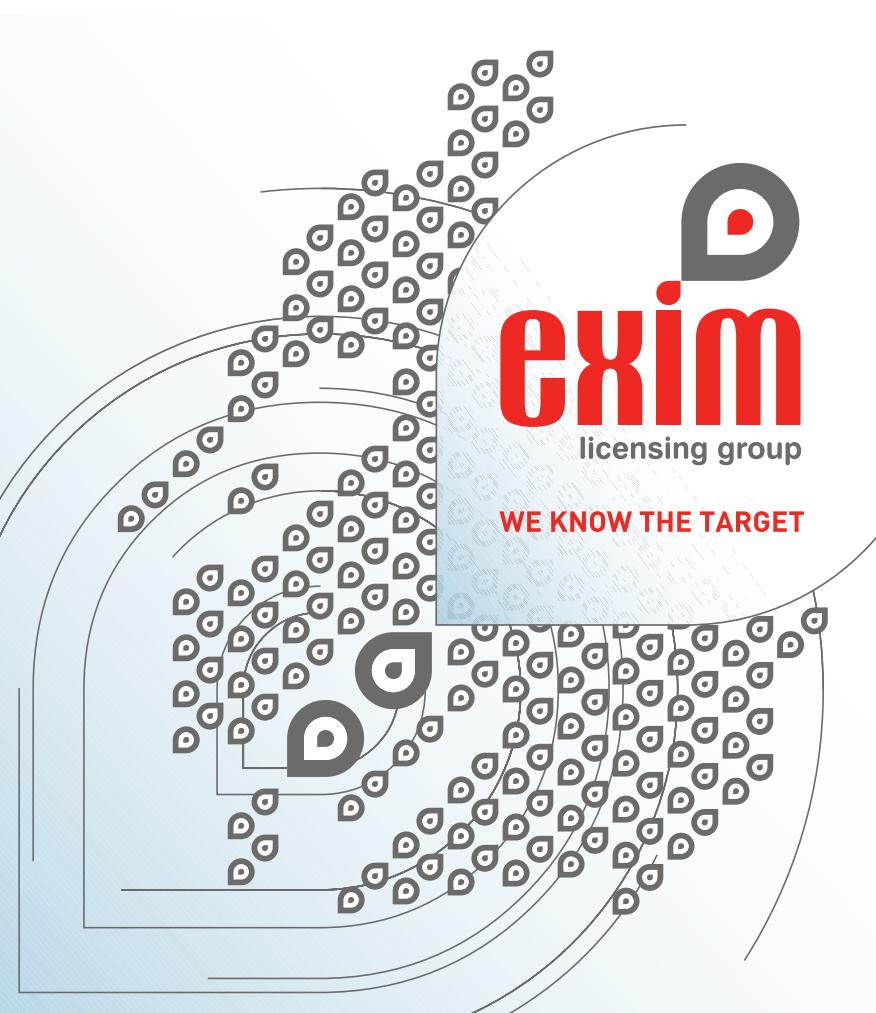
plush (US\$5.95) coming in a close second. In fact, he believes toys have the best long-term potential for generating revenue at WickedCoolGirls and plans on adding more plush and novelty SKUs to the site's 1,000-item lineup; he's always on the lookout for new merch and hot trends.

Dewey is something of an expert at tapping into the tween psyche. The former screenwriter for *Saved By The Bell* started the on-line business out of his North Hollywood garage in 1999. The site grew as a tween-targeted on-line retailer selling licensed vintage-cartoon merch, and currently boasts around 3,200 SKUs, with new ones being added daily—ranging from US\$3 stickers to US\$345 statues.

WickedCoolGirls is one of many planned spin-offs. SuperHeroStore.com already launched in May selling superhero-related merch, and more sites are slated for the coming year. **DW**



The Varsity Share Bear is a top seller on WickedCoolGirls



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# POSTMAN PAT TEAMS UP WITH THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE

## ER signs, seals and delivers Postman Pat for a philatelic celebration

promotional partnerships to help Pat work his way into the hearts and minds of U.S. gatekeepers.

Enter an obvious choice: The United States Postal Service. In April, ER and the USPS signed a promotional agreement involving England's favorite mail carrier. And thanks to some great timing, *Postman Pat* was a major participant in the States' largest philatelic exhibition, which took place over the last week of May this year. He left his fictional home in Greendale and set off to Washington to do walkabouts, interact with the attendees through letter-writing activities and screen episodes at the conference that's held only once every 10 years.

ER struck up the partnership with the USPS after landing its HBO Family deal in Q3 2005. Beyond the two entities' obvious connection, the USPS signed with the series with the hope kids could make the connection between the series' themes of community and sharing to translate into hobby-heavy endeavours such as collecting stamps. For ER, having *Postman Pat* onboard

With its 20-plus-year heritage in the U.K., Entertainment Rights' *Postman Pat* has an impressive 98% awareness with the country's moms and caregivers. But now that the revamped series (originally commissioned by the BBC for a 2004 launch) is airing HBO Family in the States, the London, England-based IP owner is pursuing

with the post office gives the brand a direct interactive experience with consumers to help grow its fan base.

Leading up to the event, USPS distributed *Postman Pat Activity Packs* to 5,000 classrooms in the six states surrounding Washington D.C. to both promote school trips to the conference and have students from junior kindergarten to grade three interact with the character. HBO Family will also include *Postman Pat* in its cable in the classroom initiative, potentially reaching 90,000 schools in the U.S., and Barnes & Noble stores have agreed to carry the brand's sound books from Publications International Limited.

Kathleen Hricik, executive VP and managing director of ER's U.S., Canadian and Latin American pursuits, says in the multi-platform universe, it's increasingly difficult to make a brand front of mind for kids. "It's not a matter of just popping a television series onto a platform and hoping it sticks with the audience," she explains.

The promotional work has encouraged ER to brainstorm more opportunities with the USPS. Although it's early days, Hricik suggests some themes may look at how to reach moms and caregivers because they're key to what their kids watch, when it comes to preschoolers. "Whether it's through viral pursuits or mommy groups, we're looking at other ways to extend the awareness."

Beyond new marketing initiatives, Hricik and her team are also looking at old-school merch plans as well. ER is hitting the floor at the Licensing Show to lock down a U.S. master toy licensee for a 2008 product launch. Hricik says potential publishing deals and home entertainment are also on the radar. ■

by lianne stewart



# New screens transit eyeballs to Decode's series of shorts

**T**alk about a captive audience. Transit systems across the globe are increasingly installing monitors to help boost ad revenue, while also giving commuters something to stare at besides their neighbor's newspaper. The TTC, Toronto, Canada's mass transit system, has spiced up its current offering of local news programming and advertising in its subway stops thanks to Decode Entertainment. *Dudson*'s 15-second shorts debuted on TV screens installed on the subterranean platforms last March.

The completed 25-episode CGI series created by Nathan Jurevicius stars a goofy-looking three-eyed character who turns normal daily events into weird and funny adventures. *Dudson* was delivered to Toronto's transit system via its OneStop network screens, and the four-year deal will see an ep run every five minutes on the TTC subway system, potentially reaching one million commuters each day. Interested viewers can also download the shorts onto their mobiles and blog about the eps on [www.dudson.tv](http://www.dudson.tv).

Beth Stevenson, Decode's partner, says the prodco approached the transit system after receiving some inspiration from Agogo's Steve Ching. He set up a similar deal for his *Jack & Marcel* series of shorts on Hong Kong's subways. With transit being its only port of call, she says Ching built a substantial licensing campaign based on the animated shorts about two years ago. Although *Dudson* started its life as a line of exclusive toys in Asia, Decode's plan is to create 90 shorts, develop a full-on 11-minute TV series for a potential 2007 launch, and then return the focus to merchandising. "When we're walking in the broadcaster's door, we're there with short-form content already made and ready for mobile or for any other platforms broadcasters are interested in exploring," she says.



Decode is thinking of extending its transit program into other major city centers as soon as international broadcast deals start to get hammered out

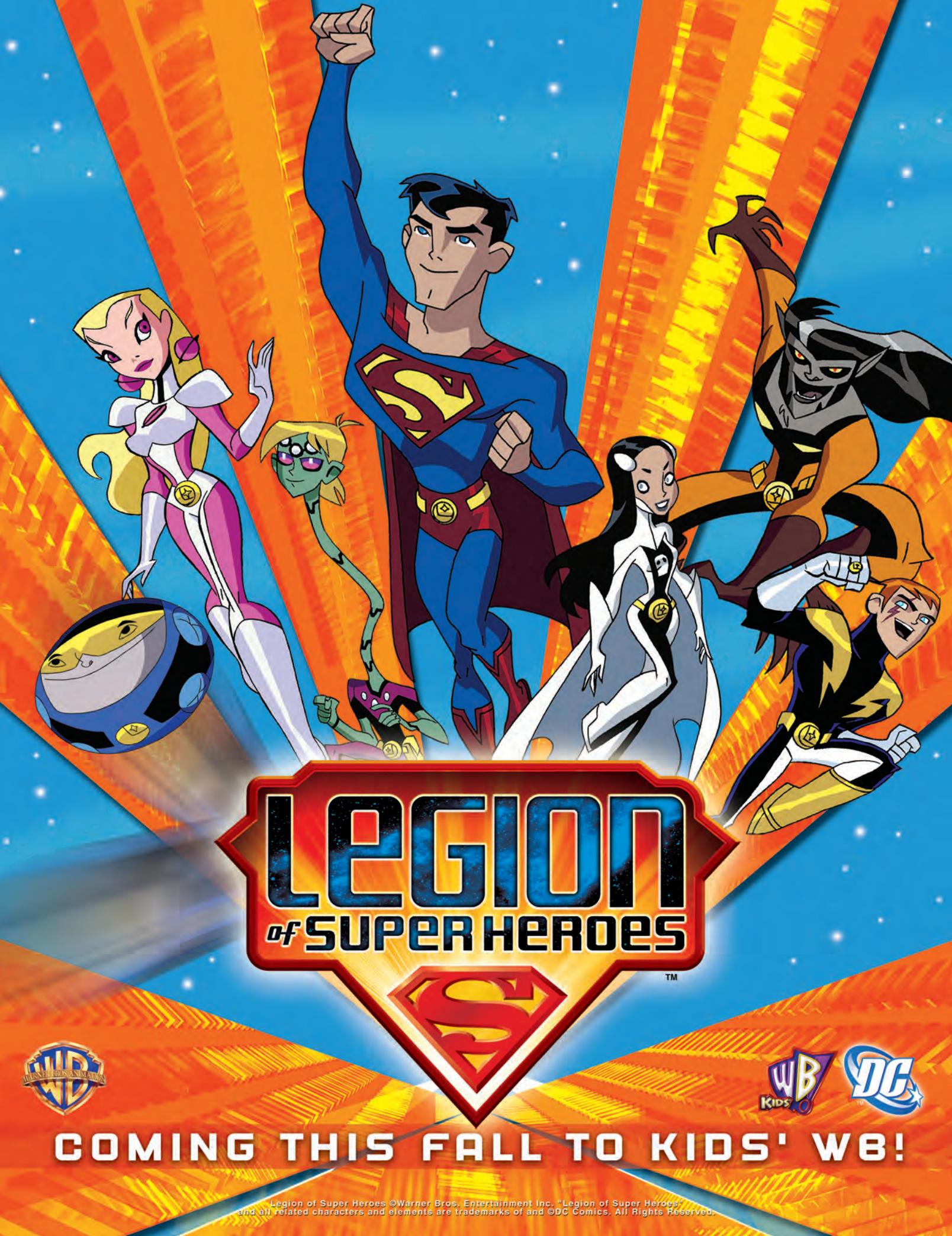
With the television industry focusing its efforts on reaching as many screens as possible, Decode sees this as more of a traditional broadcast deal than a marketing effort. But there will be a highly visible campaign to get commuters to pay attention to the subway TVs at the end of August and beginning of September; just around the time students are preparing to return to school. Some of Toronto's buses and streetcars will feature wrap-around advertising, and bus shelters will promote the series to transport takers above-ground. **LS**

## News in Brief

### Nat Geo helps U.S. kids find their place in the world

With almost half of American kids ages eight to 17 unable to find India on a map, National Geographic has set out to rectify this generation's woefully inadequate understanding of world geography. Along with leaders from both the public and private sectors such as the Smithsonian and Anheuser Busch Adventure Parks, Nat Geo created a five-year multimedia campaign dubbed *My Wonderful World* that aims to promote geographic literacy to U.S. youth.

Launched in May, web portal [MyWonderfulWorld.org](http://MyWonderfulWorld.org), is the on-line heart of the multi-pronged program. The site offers a fun and interactive way to link to geography and games for kids and teens. Resources for teachers and parents, such as suggestions for family outings to current museum exhibits and simple scavenger hunts with geographical clues, can also be found on the site. Additionally, public service announcements meant to prod parents and educators into getting kids interested in the subject hit the airwaves the same month.



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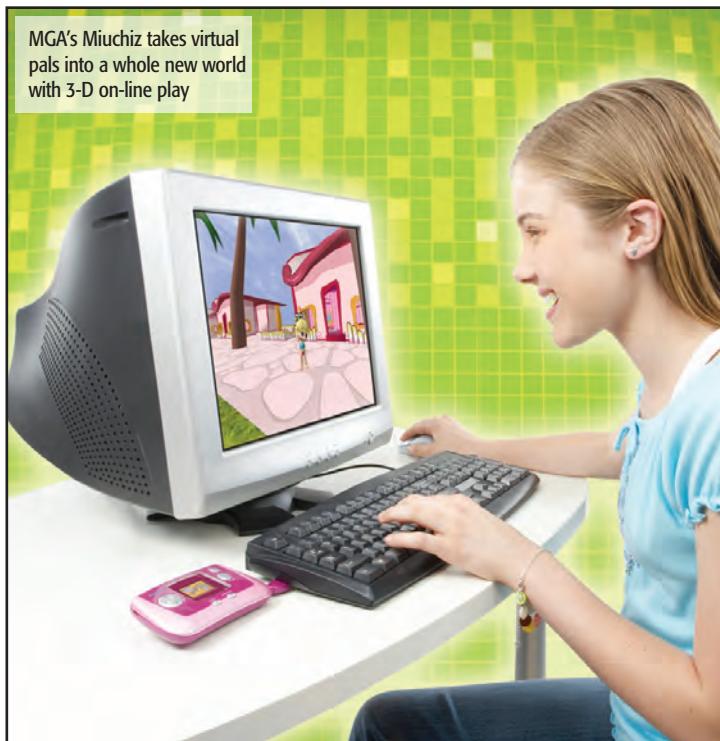


COMING THIS FALL TO KIDS' WB!

# interactive media matrix

by dan waldman

## Miuchiz moves MGA to cyberspace



Toyco MGA is making its mark on the digital landscape with its new virtual companion, Miuchiz. Pronounced my-oo-cheez, the virtual pet combines handheld interaction with on-line gaming. Unlike the current gen of digital handheld pals that feature small pixelated images on-screen, the portable devices are outfitted with colorful hi-res touch screens and motion sensors.

MGA's new tech toy can plug into a computer via a USB connector and bring the characters to life in a 3-D web universe with thousands of other players. Pending parental permission, kids will be able to control 3-D versions of their virtual pals on-line. They can chat and play games with other Miuchiz owners and outfit their own characters in different ways, such as buying them new clothes from a virtual mall.

CEO Isaac Larian says the new toy is MGA's number one priority outside of Bratz, and it is the first of many electronics toys the company plans to introduce over the next two years.

Miuchiz heads to mass retail in late July and will be backed by TV, in-store ads and promos. Seven models kick-off the line, with certain models appealing to girls, while others, such as battling monsters, are boy-skewing. Not surprisingly, MGA is leveraging the strength of its bestselling Bratz brand for the new venture and two SKUs will feature the fashion dolls. The US\$29.99 price includes a handheld component and free access to on-line play.

## PS3 has big power and price tag to match

Eager gamers will have to wait until November to get their hands on Sony's new super console, but the anticipated E3 unveiling of the PS3 next-gen system put much speculation to rest. Sony even threw in a few surprises.

Consumers will have two models to choose from when the console hits retail. The first sports a US\$599 price tag and comes equipped with a 60GB hard drive, while a stripped-down, 20GB version will sell for a slightly cheaper US\$499.

The biggest bombshell is Sony has introduced some new tech to the PS3 controller that should amp up game play. The controller resembles its predecessors in shape and function, but as with the upcoming Nintendo Wii, the PS3 controller will be both wireless and motion sensitive. Blue tooth technology will enable kids to play games wirelessly and manipulate play by tilting and twisting the remote. The controller plugs into the system via a USB cable for charging.

Not to be outdone, Nintendo execs also made an appearance at the show to discuss the company's next-generation system. Unlike Sony, Nintendo is keeping a lid on some of Wii's features. It has been confirmed, however, the price will not exceed US\$250 and will hit shelves in the Q4 this year.



# BitTorrent gets mainstream seal of approval

On-line piracy has become a great concern for visual-content producers across the board—no one wants a repeat of what happened in the music industry. In the case of feature films, the Motion Picture Association of America estimates the practice cost the major studios US\$2.3 billion in revenue last year. To stem the tide, Warner Bros. has inked a formal deal to sell its catalogue of movies and TV series via the BitTorrent file sharing system.

This agreement has raised some eyebrows, as San Francisco-based BitTorrent's president Ashwin Navin acknowledges the software has been used for illegal downloading. But this new setup should help to curb piracy by offering content for secure download at low price points, he explains. Although the cost to consumers hasn't been confirmed



yet, he says TV shows could cost as little as a buck a pop.

WB's content will be available as early as this summer. New theatrical releases should be downloadable the same day the DVD hits retail, but plans are still being hammered out for TV ep release dates. "We'll work out details, but we want to

have content available as close to network broadcast as possible," he says.

BitTorrent, invented as a file-sharing system in 2001, was initially used by hardcore computer geeks who wanted an easy way to transfer huge files over the internet. It became more mainstream in 2003, before being incorporated into a legal on-line content aggregator (bittorrent.com) in 2004.

The agreement with Warner Bros. works on a revenue-sharing model and is not exclusive. In terms of kids content, Navin says he's always looking for other distribution partners in just about any genre. "We want to be comprehensive about the content, so we want to work with as many artists and publishers as possible."

## Indie developers take a shot at big-time game play

This summer, GarageGames is giving aspiring video game creators a chance to break into the market. The Eugene, Oregon-based game developer's Break Into Games competition begins this month. Contestants will have until August 15th to put together submissions, using GarageGames' Torque Game Builder software, and upload them to breakintogames.com. It doesn't cost anything to enter and Garage isn't putting content restrictions on submissions.

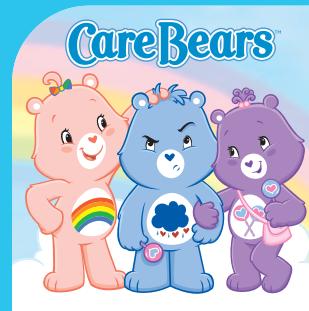
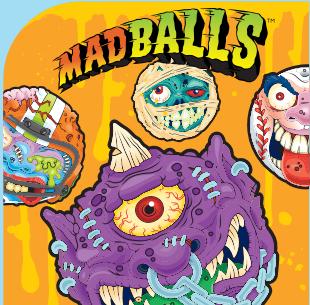
In October, the top 10 finalists will head to Indie GamesCon, GarageGames' annual event in Oregon to have their games judged American Idol-style. The panel will consist of industry experts such as Greg Canessa, the group manager for Xbox Live Arcade and Margaret Wallace, CEO of Skunk Studios. The grand prize winner gets a publishing contract with GarageGames, which will help bring the product to market through its distribution network that includes MSN Games and Yahoo! Games.

Independent games haven't traditionally accounted for a big chunk of the North American market, but recent data shows things are changing. Widespread broadband usage in U.S. homes, coupled with the proliferation of on-line gaming hubs, is helping independent on-line games take a fair share of US\$1.4-billion PC games sales. Industry

tracker, The NPD Group, released stats last month that included revenues from casual gaming sites for the first time ever, with a US\$52-million haul in 2005 for the category.



GarageGames is a major player in the independent games arena. Its *MarbleBlast Ultra* is one of the top-performing titles on Xbox's Live Arcade service. Business director Jay Moore is hoping the Break Into Games competition will not only bolster the company's profile, but will also produce some new hit titles.



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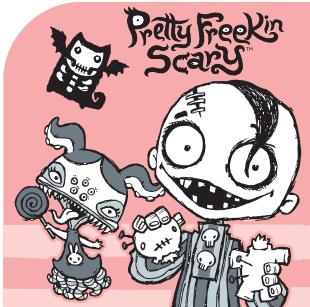
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It's almost impossible to predict what will make a show or brand sing on shelves. But in taking a forensic approach, Kids Industries partner Gary Pope dissects the appeal of current contenders and comes a little closer to uncovering what's hot in this edition of...

# PSI:NY

## PROPERTY SCENE INVESTIGATION

by gary pope

**IT'S** no coincidence some of the best properties are a joy to work on for both the suits and creatives involved in bringing them to market. When the two groups understand each other's motivations, it tends to end up with a commercially viable and creatively excellent product. And the thing proving to be the genesis of the next round of really hot properties is the teams that are willing to work in lockstep, where the creatives can do a deal and the suits understand the nature of storytelling. A wily marketing campaign might help pull the wool over the children's eyes temporarily, but it won't build a brand.

We're going to take a forensic look at four properties culled from a list of more than 45 that the staff at Kids Industries identified as hot. However, their ownership, marketing plans, licensing agreements and management are not a measure of their heat. They cannot be. The only thing to really consider is how these shows work for the children. Do they love it? Does the property complement their developmental stage and therefore engage them? Let's explore some key facets of the following hot property contenders.

### Case File #1—FRANCES

*Frances* targets older preschool girls ages three to six. Developed by New York's Jim Henson Company, with Brian Henson in the director's seat, the 52 x 11-minute series is currently being co-produced with HIT Entertainment for a spring 2007 delivery. It's quite possibly the most beautiful-looking show you'll see this year, and rumor has it there's significant international broadcaster interest in the project.

In the later stages of the show's development process, Kids Industries researched various aspects of the brand and its potential to connect with young children and their caregivers. Before we get started, it's worth noting that all children follow the same developmental path—the culture a child is born into becomes increasingly important as the he/she gets older, taking precedence from approximately the age of seven onward. This is one of the key reasons excellent preschool series export so well—globally unifying themes that are incredibly difficult to replicate for children after the age of seven.

Much of the current thinking in this area is derived from the work of the Russian social psychologist and behavioural theorist, Lev Zygotsky. We therefore decided to explore some aspects of *Frances* in the context of Zygotsky's theories.



Zygotsky hypothesized a concept called The Zone of Proximal Development. This zone is the space that exists between what a child can do alone and what he or she can do with the support of others. Children both learn and achieve the most in this zone—they are pushed to their limit and so they develop.

It could be argued *Frances* has been created around this theory. She's continually pushing her boundaries, taking chances and learning from her mistakes, so she's constantly in the zone. And maybe it's because of this that she's a happy, growing and energetic little girl. Well, badger.

Perhaps the best thing about *Frances* is it drills far deeper into the social and emotional development of children than many that have taken this route. The two are intertwined and the series works with this to great effect in each episode. For example, during one episode, *Frances*'s friend drops a papier maché fish and it breaks. *Frances* is heart-sore and angry at the loss of the fish. So palpable is her grief that during our research session, 21 of our 24 subjects had to go and sit with mom to watch it. But because *Frances*'s creative team has such an implicit understanding of the target audience, we all end up learning about pride, loss and making up as the badger reconciles with her friend.

We also looked at the series educational aspects. Thought and language are interdependent, so we wanted to see if *Frances* supported the development of language skills

among its wee watchers. The issue of preschoolers and appropriate TV exposure has been making headlines lately and while this isn't the time to wade into the debate, it's fair to say children may experience language development benefits from watching television. This depends on the child's linguistic maturity,

age, developmental suitability to the show, the involvement of parents and the quantity and quality of television they watch.

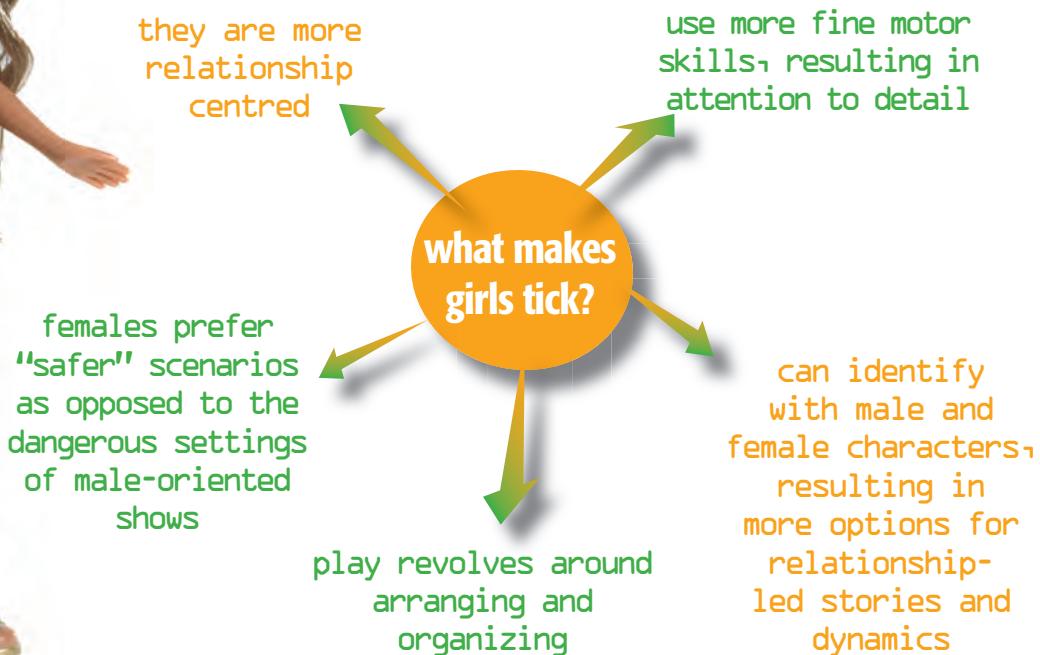
During the investigative process, we asked 24 mothers what they thought about several key aspects of the show. Most of all we wanted to understand whether children's language skills could be encouraged. We explored what transpired between the kids and their caregivers after watching the show, and the responses were universal. All of the children engaged in unprompted conversation with their mothers/guardians about what they had seen and continued to do so for at least two days after the viewing, exploring detailed aspects of the emotional and social goings on in *Frances*'s house with their families. Not a bad start.

Layered humor is another key to the little badger's appeal. We believe this is why the show achieves a clear audience stretch. Children from ages three to seven are engaged by a wide variety of humor techniques. But this group can't process and understand puns, sarcasm or innuendo. The more appropriate comedic forms for this age group would be physical action and sudden surprise, among others. *Frances* contains and uses all these methods in both obvious and subtle ways.

The use of motion capture to animate *Frances* allows her to make comical faces and playful gestures. This removes the distancing effects of much TV animation created by such things as limited character movement, giving her an instant appeal. It is rare that children experience this detailed style of humor when watching animation made for TV, as it is more associated with big-budget, Pixar-style fare. But when this badger makes it to the little screen, we believe she's going to have some pretty big impact.

## Case File #2: BRATZ

There are some basics about girls and the choices they make that we know to be true and irrefutable (see the "What makes girls tick?" chart below), and whether a girl is a tomboy or a girlie-girl, they



still apply. If we look at the entire and seemingly endless Bratz franchise, its brand values are simple. The characters are a group of friends and play is relationship-centric. There are more than 40 female characters of different styles and ages, and male characters, too. The Bratz lines are infused with collectibility, aspiration and social autonomy driving the numerous arranging and organizing play values/patterns into the hearts and minds of the Global Girl.

Aside from fulfilling the basic needs of girls, the brand bridges gaps between ages and play patterns. Dressing up is an inherent (but perhaps, learned) part of a girl's development and the Bratz brand has tapped into every aspect of this play pattern and its associated rituals.

As girls around age seven move away from playing with dolls and their interests turn to makeup and clothes, they are drawn to predominantly pretty and glamorous images. Sparkly eyes, lipstick, hair and shoes are the four main elements young girls focus on, and the Bratz dolls work it. They have large, made-up eyes, huge hair, big shoes, and their non-existent noses accentuates their lips. Finally, the characters themselves are portrayed as teenagers, not grown-ups, making them more aspirational—not to mention the fact that their clothes are, like, so this season.

When it comes to TV shows, it's usually easier to replicate these dynamics using live action rather than animation. *Two of a Kind* with the Olsen twins, *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* and *Zoey 101* allow their characters to be part of a group dynamic, have a strong family network and focus on fashion. But there's something more brilliant at play with the *Bratz* TV series. It's managed to successfully build on what has made Bratz the brand (brand first—not TV, remember) such a hit. Every episode, like every product line, is infused with friends, fashion and dilemmas. A masterstroke in brand management? Or the suits talking to the creatives?

### Case File #3: SHURIKEN SCHOOL

This show, on a very selfish level, is one of my favorites. There's simply so much in it to understand and explore. It's European and comes from a slightly different creative starting place than many boys action-oriented series. The Xilam (France)/Zinkia (Spain) co-production has already proved a hit on Jetix U.K. and ITV, and is scheduled hit U.S. airwaves in September on Nicktoons Network.

The combination of anime and European style fuses to create, what we think, will be a truly global proposition. There is so much to say about this one, but we're going to focus on two areas: structure and identification.

*Shuriken School* doesn't follow a strict three-act structure or begin each installment with the episodic problem. Rather, a gently paced introduction sets up characters and situations and



then music and humor help to pick up the pace, drawing children from six to 10 into the narrative. The principle problem, when it eventually does present itself, ends up propelling the humor. And that's what makes this show so great—with humor as the driver, it becomes a comedy/action toon as opposed to an action vehicle (as its Ninja roots might suggest). This is perfect for boys six to 10. They love the funny stuff and the action. Mix this with the richest characterization we've seen in a long time and you've got something special.

Children need to identify with their TV heroes in order to engage. Identification can come in a wide variety of formats and it differs from child to child. One of the key factors for the success of the show is the incredibly rich and solid cast of characters. Ordinarily, we might find six or so principle characters. But at *Shuriken School* we get to know more than 20 characters very well.

While it's easy to dilute character presentation and end up with nothing much at all, Xilam and Zinkia created character riches in excess. And this means identification—the cognitive emotional process a child goes through when deciding their preference—has a much wider scope. There are simply more characters the children can identify with on a personal level.

*"PSI" continued on page 81*

# LICENSING ONE ON ONE

## WITH GARY CAPLAN



**Ever wonder what makes some of the greatest minds working in licensing today tick? KidScreen sent industry veteran Gary Caplan on a mission to find out what keeps these execs up at night and to uncover the influences and experiences that have shaped their careers. For the first installment of this new series Gary sits down with Nickelodeon & Viacom Consumer Products president Leigh Anne Brodsky. Read on and discover what she has in common with SpongeBob, among other things...**

**GC:** I've known you for so long and always admired your professionalism, but we've never had a chance to visit one on one...How did you get into the business of licensing?

**LB:** My first job out of college was at United Media and my then neighbor Mike Georgopoulos was the head of licensing.

**GC:** You were lucky to get him as your first boss. He is the best. What was your title when you worked for Michael?

**LB:** I was an assistant and my first job paid US\$12,000 a year. I was offered another job the same week as a desk assistant at the Wall Street Journal for US\$8,000 a year. So I really thought I was in the big leagues when I took the job at United Media.

**GC:** I hate to ask you what year that was...  
**LB:** It was 1980.

**GC:** How long did you stay at United Media?

**LB:** I was there for 12 years and moved up

rapidly. I had a great run there and learned a lot about the business from Mike and people like Lee Mendelson and Charles Schultz.

**GC:** What were royalty rates for character and entertainment properties in the early 80s?

**LB:** I think they were probably 7% or 8%.

**GC:** I think so, too. People today wouldn't even understand those numbers, but like everything else, things change and people move on.

What do you remember most about your first job in licensing?

**LB:** I would say meeting [Peanuts creator] Charles Schultz. And within six months of graduating from college, I had a meeting with him. I was in charge of Snoopy's personal appearance program in department stores and I had to figure out how to get the costumes made and approved by Mr. Schultz. I got to spend time with him and get my picture taken with him and he did a drawing for my brother.

**GC:** Let me ask you a couple questions

about the licensing business in general. What excites you most about being in the licensing business?

**LB:** What excites me most, I think, is the creativity of it. I also think that in some ways the randomness and 'out of left field' aspects of it, as well. What is it that makes a property fly or not? I think that we always try to learn from the successes and the failures. But, at the end of the day, it is a hit business and it's one where you have that extra something that is either there or not—and I get a kick out of that because I would be the first person to say that I didn't think SpongeBob was merchandisable when I first saw it.

**GC:** That says a lot about well-managed marketing programs. What comes first the property or the marketing and management of the property?

**LB:** It is absolutely the property.

**GC:** Let's go back to what excites you about the business, what keeps your job fresh and interesting?





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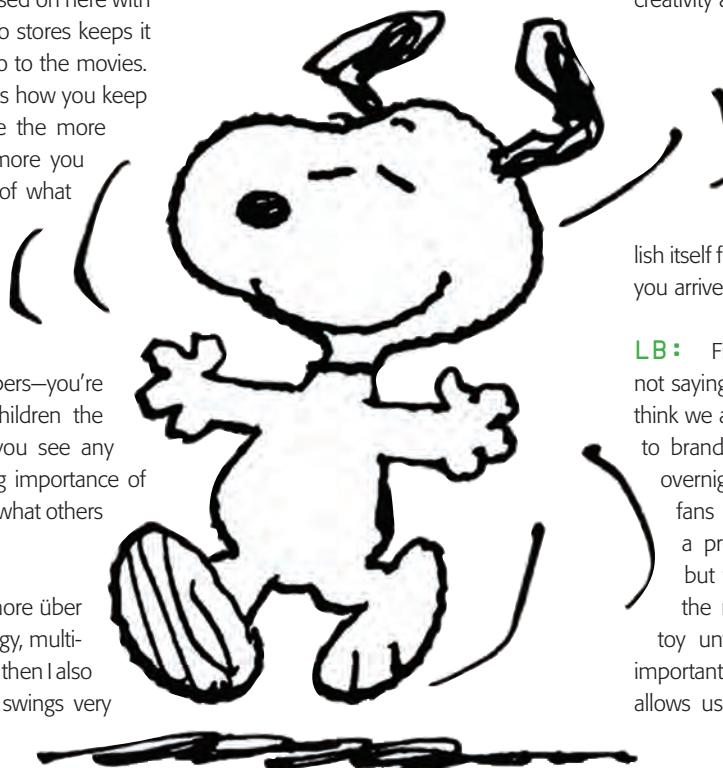
**LB:** I find the networking does. But also the mentoring part of the business is so critical, as you would no doubt agree. It's something that I spend a lot of time focused on here with my team. I also think going to stores keeps it interesting. I read a lot and go to the movies. Staying active in pop culture is how you keep your job interesting, because the more informed you are and the more you have a finger on the pulse of what is going on in this rapidly changing society, the better you can be at your job.

**GC:** You go to stores, follow pop culture and read papers—you're out there. And you have children the age of our customers. Do you see any trends? I know the increasing importance of the retailer is a key trend, but what others do you see?

**LB:** I was kind of looking more über and I thought global technology, multi-platform and multi-ethnic. But then I also think that as the pendulum swings very

there aren't enough retailers and there are so many properties that it just becomes harder

ing it to another. I would like to add that the people I have met at Nickelodeon, MTVN and Paramount are too many to name, but their creativity and talents inspire me everyday.



**GC:** One thing we were all scratching our heads about is Nickelodeon's approach to holding back on launching consumer products programs, and giving a property has a chance to establish itself first. Was that your decision? How did you arrive at that strategy?

**LB:** First of all, it's because we can. I'm not saying we don't have the pressures, but I think we are able to take a strategic approach to brand building; you can't build a brand overnight. We also have found that before fans have an emotional connection with a property they may watch the show, but they may not be inclined to spend the money to get the shirt or buy the toy until they have that attachment. It's important that we do it that way because it allows us to have a longer lifespan, ideally.

**What excites me most, I think is the creativity of it. I also think that in some ways it's the randomness and 'out of left field' aspects of licensing. What is it that makes a property fly or not?**

—Leigh Anne Brodsky

strongly to the right on the technology front, I also then see traditional as well...something like the SpongeBob Monopoly game doing as well as it has [shows there's room for tradition]. I think technology is the Ying, and traditional is the Yang. Definitely multi-platform, multi-screen and multi-ethnic. The world looks different, especially in the U.S... and I think that is a huge trend that affects everything—marketing properties and who your customer is.

**GC:** Well said. Is there anything that keeps you up at night about the business? Talk to me about the hurdles and the challenges.

**LB:** Things do keep me up at night. I think

and harder to break through. I always want to be unique and I want our brands and our properties to cover new ground.

**GC:** You oversee every type of property, from preschool to adult, how do you manage such a wide range of properties? Do you wear 15 different hats every day?

**LB:** [laughing] I think I do. It's about planning. I call it the unsexy part of the entertainment business. It is about really looking out ahead 12, 18, 24 months or more and planning, integrating with the programming and production team. It is teamwork; it is leveraging the practices with one brand and apply-

ing it to another. And it also makes our licensees and retailers happier because we are more likely to have a successful run at it if we don't go out before the property is ready.

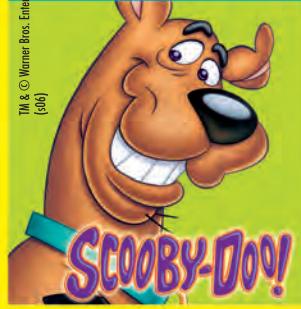
**GC:** I agree. It hurts me as a licensee, or as a representative for licensees, to have to make deals, buy and ship and go to the buyers before a property achieves recognition, let alone affection.

Let me go back to the question I asked you a few minutes ago: is it the property or the marketing and management or the properties that makes Nick properties so successful?

*"Licensing One On One" continued on page 78*



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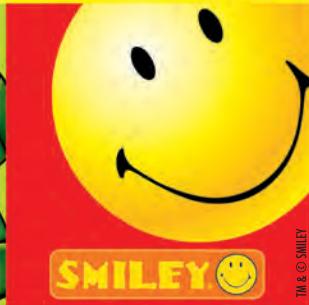
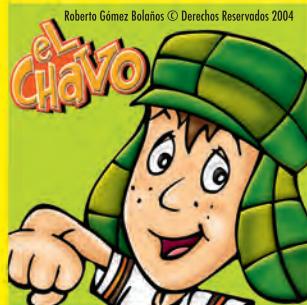
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# BERNARD



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# NEW MEDIA MERCH?

New media 2.0 platforms such as VOD and wireless are creating non-traditional outlets capable of driving licensing programs, but are retailers and licensees buying into the idea? We turned to our international panel of consumer products experts to find out if this tough crowd thinks digital media has the power to move product.



## Kirk Bloomgarden

**CEO, Copyright Promotions Licensing Group**

Unfortunately, terrestrial ratings are still the driving force for both licensees and retailers when they are looking to commit to a TV-driven property. However, as digital platforms gain in reach (which is happening quite quickly), its importance is starting to be recognized. Dual platforms—both terrestrial and digital exposure—are becoming more prevalent, so licensees and retailers are starting to understand the benefit of non-terrestrial coverage. As digital becomes more widespread, I think that in the very near future (three to five years) its impact on retail sales will start to be significant.

## Sean Clarke

**Head of licensing and marketing, Aardman Animations**

New digital platforms offer a definite opportunity to provide marketing support to develop a property and, of course, create new income streams. However, it is a very complex area with regard to ownership of digital rights in the broadcast market and the respective windows of these rights between the individual media platforms. Until the industry can agree on a common framework, we will not be able to integrate these new platforms in a meaningful way into the property brand plans we pitch to prospective licensees and retailers.



## Debra Joester

**President, The Joester Loria Group**

Over the past few years, TV-driven properties have struggled to establish successful licensing programs. In fact, retailers and manufacturers are increasingly conservative, preferring to wait for evidence of consumer awareness and demand before supporting a new TV-driven entertainment property. The top children's broadcasters have found launching a new entertainment property and converting eyeballs to licensing success is increasingly difficult. In this environment, the more limited reach of broadband, VOD and other forms of media are not considered meaningful, primary drivers of a new property, but can be an important component of an overall entertainment strategy.



## Joshua Kislevitz

**Senior VP of domestic licensing, United Media**

The focus on children's entertainment properties is not entirely based on getting the most exposure, but on having an intellectual property that resonates with a commercially reliable segment of the market. Yes, the brand should be exposed but should also be cared about and able to reach an audience in a meaningful way. Although these emerging platforms are presently most visibly geared towards adults and not creating a major impact on younger viewers, they will play a larger role in the future. These platforms are more measurable and more targeted than the traditional media, enabling the retailing community to determine demand.



## Andre Lake Mayer

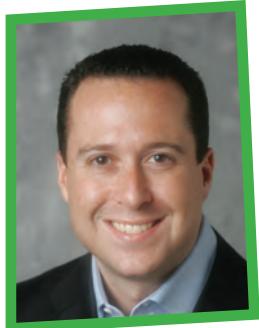
**VP of U.S. licensing, Cookie Jar Entertainment**

We consider new media and cross-platform strategies integral to our success. Research shows that close to 50% of the preschool audience is moving from TV to PC screen to further their TV-show experience. We view on-line as a way to deepen the connection with our proactive fans. In our experience, licensees and retailers are starting to consider digital exposure as a measurement of brand strength, but still rely most heavily on TV ratings. However, as consumer experiences continue to evolve outside of TV, it is critical we develop a consistent measurement tool that takes into account all media models—on air, on-line and in life.

## Eric Levin

**Executive VP, Techno Source**

Obviously, for today's kids the world of entertainment options is much more complex than just 10 years ago. [As a licensee] today you have to be looking at this issue from the perspective of 'which properties are kids finding really engaging' and not just 'which TV shows are they exposed to?' Many of the digital platforms are stickier and more engaging than traditional TV. So at Techno Source, we are looking at this issue not only from the perspective of how kids spend their time, but also how intensely they feel about the time they spend. In the end, this is really the key driver for kids buying decisions.



## Lisa Marks

**President, Lisa Marks & Associates**

Without question, content-driven properties these days need to be built and cultivated to live across multiple channels of distribution. The extent to which a traditional TV-based entertainment property successfully migrates to the new digital media platforms clearly indicates to prospective licensees and retail partners that the 'media property' is capable of being transformed into a more powerful 'media brand.' A consumer's willingness to elevate their interaction with a brand through these more intimate and self-selected media channels bodes well for the broader consumer product applications availed through strategic licensing programs.

## Doug Murphy

**Executive VP of business development, Nelvana**

It's our contention that brands can be built on any one of TV, VOD, broadband and wireless platforms. Interestingly, the notion of ratings only applies to traditional linear broadcast—and these are the metrics that the licensing and retail community holds most dear. However, if you look at the success of Sprout VOD (with nine-million views in the month of March) or the success of KOL (which boasts millions of unique kid visitors each month), it's clear the fragmentation of media consumption is well underway—with meaningful consequences for the licensing community. There has yet to be an example of a merchandising brand built on these new and exciting platforms, but it's a question of when, not if, this will happen.



## Matthew Primack

**VP, Marvel Entertainment International**

TV-driven properties are limited by TV schedules. New media and multi-media applications break down these limitations by providing an always-on, accessible communication channel to a demand-driven audience. [These platforms] enable accurate and appropriate consumer targeting with identifiable and reachable audience demographics, thereby delivering a desirable sales and marketing medium for shows and associated products. This motivates licensors, licensees and retailers to engage with new media, however, the level of engagement is often limited by technical understanding and a fear of the unknown and unproven. Many are aware, but some do not know how to (or are not brave enough to) engage.



## Travis Rutherford

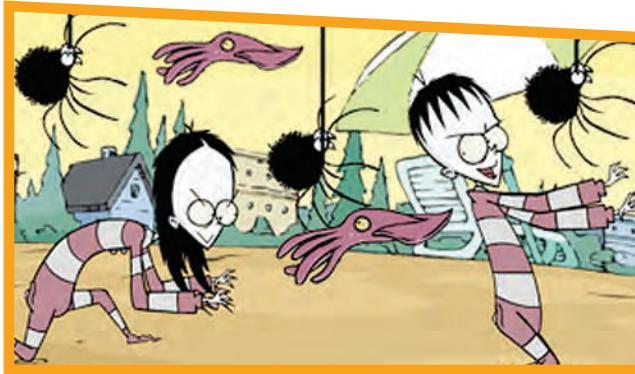
**Executive VP, MGM Consumer Products and Location Based Entertainment**

Licensees and retailers are taking digital into consideration. And, in some instances, new distribution outlets are having an affect on the sale of licensed merchandise. Marketers know there is a correlation between the age of consumers and media consumption habits and they are adapting to the proliferation of media consumption and are able to develop more finely targeted consumer propositions by media type, including digital.

For the sixth year running, KidScreen's panel of international licensees and agents sizes up the product potential of four new properties set to appear at Licensing Show

## VIRTUAL SHOWROOM

**Word on the street is that it's becoming increasingly difficult to launch a new license. Not only are retailers reticent to hand over shelf space to an unknown, it looks like licensees are becoming incredibly risk averse. This might explain why this year's group of properties met with a somewhat lukewarm reception. The panel cast nary an "excellent" vote, and a sense of "been there, done that" pervaded responses. Not surprisingly, participants' needs remain virtually unchanged from last year's survey. Respondents continued to peg TV (38%) and licensed brands (33%) as the areas in dire need of a new hit, with demand for boy- and girl-skewing properties running neck-in-neck.**



**Owner/licensor:** Star Farm Productions  
**Territory of Origin:** U.S.

**Description:** Premiering as 12 x two-minute animated shorts on the Nicktoons Network last Halloween, *Edgar & Ellen* is a 26 x half-hour animated series in development that takes a page from a kid's practical joke book. Nickelodeon UK and ABC Australia have now also signed up for the shorts, so Chicago, Illinois' Star Farm Productions is ramping up to make a full-series, with Canadian and European presale discussions underway. Books are currently published in the U.S. by Simon & Schuster and distributed in 66 countries and in 12 languages. Meanwhile, Mattel has signed up as worldwide games and puzzles licensee.

**Concept:** Edgar and Ellen, twin pranksters, stick out like sore thumbs in their idyllic community of Nod's Limbs. The two 12-year-olds live to wreak havoc upon its goody-goody inhabitants, but they always get their comeuppance by the story's end. Humorous plots focus on the twins' pranks (which always fail), but larger themes develop when they explore the history of their towering mansion and discover dozens of juicy secrets about their seemingly perfect town.

**Demo:** kids eight to 12

**Initial territories of interest:** Star Farm is fielding

### EDGAR & ELLEN

#### At-a-Glance Temperature Read

**Overall potential in respondents' product categories/territories:** fair

**Would respondents add Edgar & Ellen to their portfolios:** no (50%), n/a (30%), yes (20%)

**Best potential product category:** stationery, novelty & gift

**Desired retail channel for merch launch:** mid-tier (50%), high end/specialty (38%), mass (13%)

**Expected royalty range:** 8% to 12%

Our respondents said interest in the children's horror category is growing at a rapid clip, and is especially important in attracting consumers during that vital Halloween/pre-holiday time frame. So, the overall consensus for Edgar & Ellen was it would make for a good seasonal property.

While many respondents commented positively on the illustrative look of the evil duo, some questioned how its animation could translate to product without losing E & E's storybook feel. There were also concerns surrounding the property's overall dark tenor, which some felt might be too old for the intended core-kid demo. If Star Farm intends to keep it young, our respondents said the prodco will need to demonstrate growth to the target demo, raise local market awareness, and establish the property in core categories before attempting a roll out. "Retailers want 'new,' but they are also less willing to take risks," one participant said.

Our panel posted some interesting product ideas for the brand. One software licensee suggested launching the licensing program with a series of handheld games to test the program's interactive potential. A licensing agent said books with joke kits would draw in the core-kid demo and all of the respondents agreed the rollout should start three to six months after the series launch.

international and domestic inquiries for video games, DVDs, mobile, novelty toys, candy, stationery and apparel, among other categories

**For licensing opportunities contact:** Maureen Dilger, [maureen@starfarmproductions.com](mailto:maureen@starfarmproductions.com) or 312-226-7130

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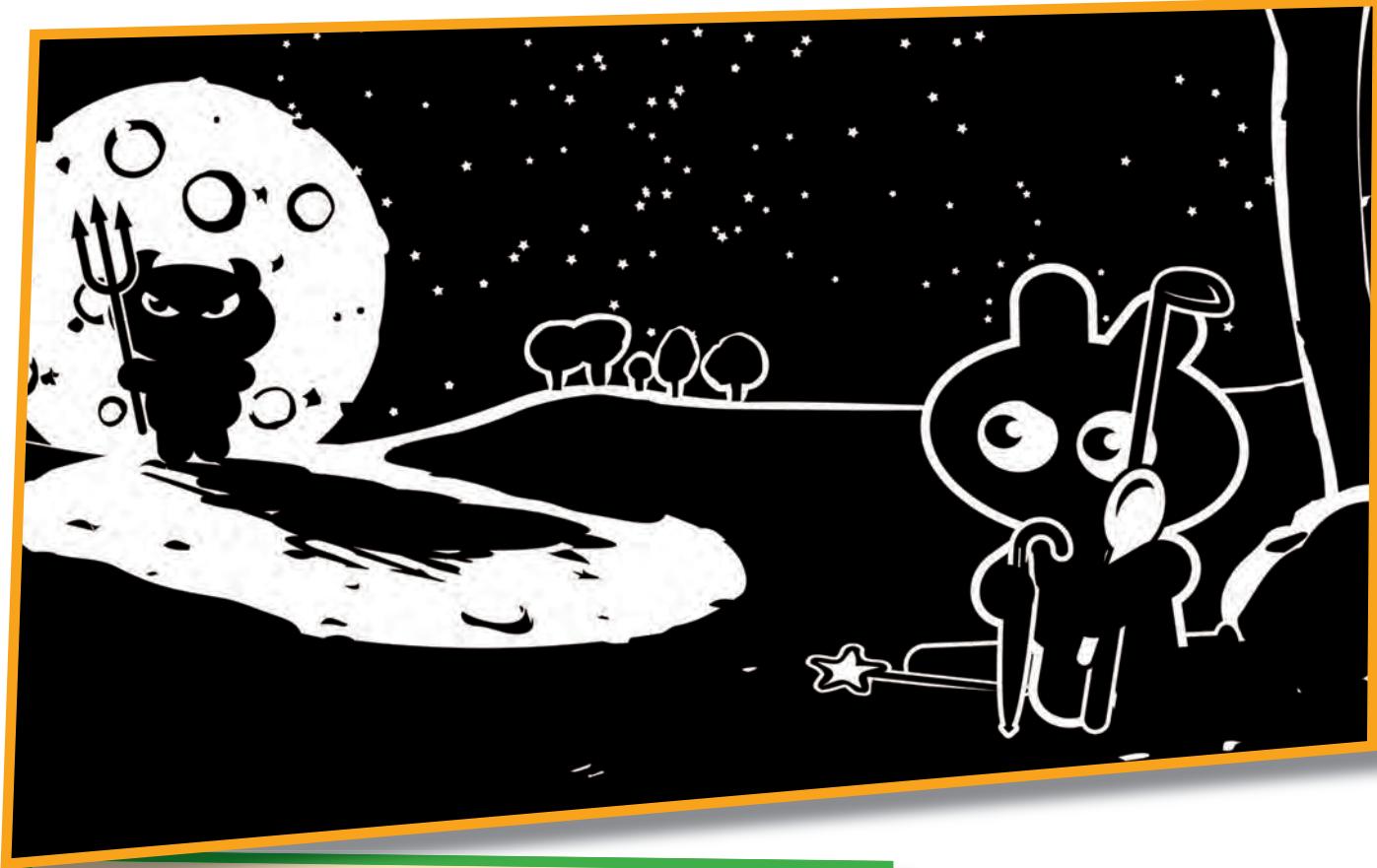
[www.dragontalestv.com](http://www.dragontalestv.com)

Source: NTI PBS pocketpiece, Dragon Tales (M-F) Season High Rating, 01/06 vs. 09/05 thru 01/06



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## THE IMP

### At-a-Glance Temperature Read

**Overall potential in respondents' product categories/territories:** fair

**Would respondents add The Imp to their portfolios:** yes (40%), no (27%), n/a (33%)

**Best potential product category:** apparel, novelty & gift

**Desired retail channel for merch launch:** high-end/specialty (70%), mid-tier (15%), mass (15%)

**Expected royalty range:** 8% to 12%

Although The Imp's overall potential in respondents' product categories and territories was rated as only fair, this series generated the highest number of responses and comments. Almost half of the participants would add the property to their portfolios, pointing to the evil protagonist's distinct and stark look. One respondent even exclaimed: "Finally, something a little different!"

But our panel suggested the property looks and feels grown up, so Red Kite may want to consider upping the target to an older demo from its intended eight to 12 age range. However, the panelists noted angling for licensing deals in the tween and teen market would unfortunately open the door to a lot of stiff competition for shelf space.

All is not lost, though. One participant said a viral approach to seeding the market would not only maintain the property's overall underground feel but also inspire demand from this finicky demo. Many of the respondents pointed to mobile as a great promotional tactic to take. As for when to launch, the majority felt the licensing program should hit retail in conjunction with the TV series, while several said Red Kite might want to consider making a product push a year to six months before the program broadcasts.

**Owner/licensor:** Red Kite Animations

**Territory of origin:** U.K.

**Description:** With nods to Film Noir and graphic novels, the first 13 of 65 one-minute shorts have been created for Disney Japan and Cartoon Network US's Sunday Pants block. The darkly humorous series features the voices of Stephen Mangan and Julian Rhind-Tutt from the BAFTA award winning series Green Wing.

**Concept:** The Imp really really wants to be evil—but his stacks of self-help books and overly dramatic plans to bring about hell on earth keep getting in his way. His brother and roommate, Bob, is just trying to keep things in order and lead a calm domestic life. And The Imp's incessant attempts to bring about the apocalypse and over-compensate for his own inadequacies make normalcy a simply impossible state to achieve.

**Demo:** kids eight to 12 (and up)

**Initial territories of interest:**

All of the categories are open for North America, Japan, South Korea, Europe

**For licensing opportunities contact:**

Ken Anderson and Sueann Smith, Red Kite Animations, 44-131-554-0060 or [info@redkite-animation.com](mailto:info@redkite-animation.com)



**Owner/licensor:** BRB, MANGA,  
DAIWON

**Territory of origin:** Spain/Korea/U.S.  
**Description:** Premiering this summer on South Korea's KBS network, the 26 x half-hour action/comedy is slated to debut later this year on TVE and Jetix in Spain, Portugal's TVI, RAI in Italy and other networks in the Middle East and Latin America. A feature film based on the series is in pre-production, and a publishing deal is in final negotiations.

**Concept:** When a young boy is lucky enough to get a bionic arm, little does he realize it will also turn him into the cyborg heir of the legendary Eon, the heroic victor of the Robot Wars. With the help of his comical pet, Buttons, Marty is now charged with protecting his fellow citizens from a renewed robot threat.

**Demo:** kids eight to 12

**Initial territories of interest:** With all categories currently open, BRB is eager to speak with licensees worldwide. Proposed international agents include LOSANI for Latin America, CTM in Germany, Benelux's Telescreen and The Licensing Factory in Italy.

**For licensing opportunities, please contact:** Jesús Díaz, 34-917-711-400  
or [jesusd@brb.es](mailto:jesusd@brb.es)

*"Virtual Showroom" continued on page 80*

## IRON KID

### At-a-Glance Temperature Read

**Overall potential in respondents' product categories/territories:** fair

**Would respondents add Iron Kid to their portfolios:** no (40%), n/a (40%), yes (20%)

**Best potential product category:** toys & games

**Desired retail channel for merch launch:** mass (67%), mid-tier (33%)

**Expected royalty range:** 8% to 12%

Any hesitation about Iron Kid's licensing potential centers solely on the competition factor. The panel said action/adventure series are seemingly everywhere, and one participant added the real challenge will be in convincing "retailers why THIS show will resonate MORE with kids than the others."

Several respondents were also concerned about Iron Kid's ability to stand out considering, as one apparel licensee put it, "competition from the big-spending properties." That said, a South American-based participant said there's a lot of opportunity for new boy properties with strong characters in territories such as Mexico. "It looks like it will have lots of action and the merchandise will look great on the shelves," the licensing agent said.

All of the participants agreed product rollout should occur three to six months after the series launches, but only if the ratings prove strong, especially with more development-intensive categories. A video game exec said the best course of action is to show a slow ratings build and have the series in as many territories as possible. "We need to see a new property behave successfully on TV with its target demo and possibly in toy and comic book first, before taking it on in the costly, long-lead, game development [category]," the exec said.

*"Licensing One On One" continued from page 68*

**LB:** I think it all starts with a great story, a great character and an emotional connection that you have with your audience—and all that comes first. Then from a licensing business perspective it is also specifically about getting your products placed at the right time, in the right packaging at the right price point with the right amount of support to help it move on the shelf and that is all about great retailer and licensee relationships. It's the blend of those two things.

**GC:** You must be able to convey that to the retailers because it seems to me that there is a heck of a lot of Nick products in the retail community now. You must have a really good retail development team?

**LB:** I also think that it is bringing the brand to life on the retail shelves. The fun and the humor, all the things that make the network a kid's destination from an entertainment perspective, we then try to create that in the retail environment.

**GC:** On a personal note, is there any particular Nickelodeon character that you identify with?

**LB:** I have to say SpongeBob. I'm an optimist and I love fish.

**GC:** When you were little, what toys did you play with?

**LB:** I had a Raggedy Ann doll. I remember having a Mrs. Beasley doll.

**GC:** What a coincidence. Raggedy Ann was the first license I signed for my company, in 1971. Who was Mrs. Beasley?

**LB:** Mrs. Beasley was a doll in a show with Buffy and Jody and Mr. French. It was called *A Family Affair*.

**GC:** Oh yes! Mr. French, of course I remember that.

**LB:** [Buffy] had a doll, it was the Mrs. Beasley doll and I loved it.

**GC:** So, tell me about your family.

**LB:** There's my husband Greg, we just celebrated our 20th, and our two children Ali (16) and Daniel (14). I am very lucky.

**GC:** What do you do in your free time?

**LB:** I hang with my kids and my husband. We have a house in Woodstock, New York. We go to the theatre a lot, we travel. I do yoga and I'm in a book group.

**GC:** What is the last book you read?

**LB:** *In Cold Blood*. I read it in five hours this past Saturday because on Sunday we had our book group and I had to have it done and, my God, it was fantastic. Amazing. My last business book was *Managing Transitions* I also found that to be very good.

**GC:** You've achieved a lot in this business. But looking back, if you hadn't gotten into licensing what do you think you would have ended up doing?

**LB:** I did an internship in Worcester, Massachusetts with the local cable network there and I would have wanted to be in the news business. I had also interviewed with CBS in the news department. I didn't get an offer though, but that would have been something that I probably would have wanted to pursue.

**GC:** There are a lot of people entering the business nowadays. What advice would you give to somebody starting out?

**LB:** I would say, be true to yourself. Do a job that you think you will like and have fun doing, and also take chances, especially when you are young—go for it.

**GC:** Looking back over the last 25 years, what would be your most memorable moment in licensing and of what achievement you are most proud?

**LB:** I would say that my activity with the Children's Brain Tumor Foundation was my most important accomplishment. I feel that I was able to combine the idea of doing well with doing good and I think it's good for our business and our industry. I feel very proud that I have been able to make a little dent in helping families who have this horrible problem.

**GC:** You were most responsible for making it LIMA's official charity?

**LB:** Yes. I was honored by the Children's



Brain Tumour Foundation. First it roped me in and made me be a co-chair of its gala, and the next year [the Children's Brain Trust Foundation] honored me. The following year, I said I think we can make a new revenue stream if we make the foundation an official LIMA charity.

when everybody could plan to give and put it into their budget to give. I also got the industry press involved to help us get the message out...I didn't want to do anything half-assed. I wanted to do something successful and I think we have done a good job at supporting the cause.

**GC:** I remember that.

**LB:** People put them in their cars.

**GC:** Of course I did, who didn't? Thanks again Leigh Anne. It's been a pleasure spending time with you.

**Things do keep me up at night. I think there aren't enough retailers and there are so many properties that it just becomes harder and harder to break through.**

—Leigh Anne Brodsky

I went to the LIMA board and pitched. The board was considering a number of different charities, but I felt the fact that brain tumors are the number-one cancer killer of kids zero to 20 [was the most compelling]. I wanted to make it as easy as possible for people to give, so rather than asking for money constantly, I said let's do it once a year and tie it to Licensing Show

**GC:** I certainly agree with you. When you look at the licensing side of the business though, what have you done over the past 20 years that took your breath away?

**LB:** Well, Garfield. We sold four-million Garfield Stuck On You plush in one year when I was at United Media, and that is a pretty incredible feat.

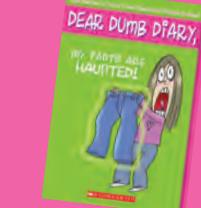
*Gary Caplan is a licensing industry pioneer and president of Gary Caplan Inc., a Studio City, California-based consultancy specializing in the marketing and management of licensing programs. For further information, check out [www.garycaplaninc.com](http://www.garycaplaninc.com).*

*A full transcript of Gary and Leigh Anne's conversation is available at [kidscreen.com](http://kidscreen.com) under the current issue heading.*

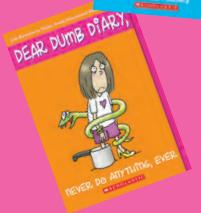
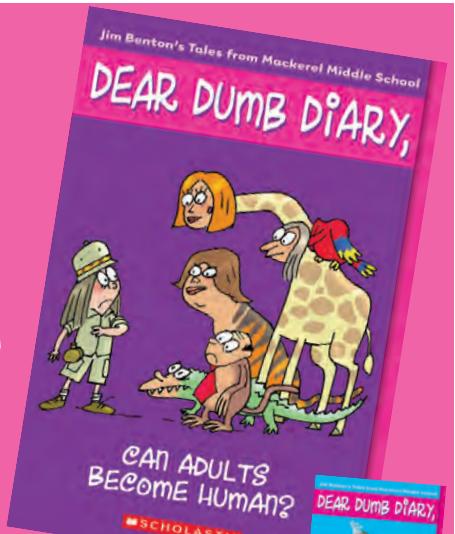
From Jim Benton, creator of It's Happy Bunny™



**DEAR DUMB DIARY**



**ONE MILLION BOOKS!**



The critically acclaimed DEAR DUMB DIARY series from Scholastic has sold over one million books, and the newest title in the series popped up on [The New York Times Bestsellers List for kids](#).

To find out more about this breakout series, call Julie Kane-Ritsch at The Gotham Group, or meet Jim at the Licensing Show in NY.  
( Booth 1833 )



*"Virtual Showroom" continued from page 77*

**Owner/licensor:** Nelvana

**Territory of origin:** U.S.

**Description:** This 52 x 11-minute animated series, produced by Nelvana, is based on the book *An Octopus Followed Me Home* by Dan Yaccarino, author of *Oswald*. It debuted at MIPTV 2006 with a U.S. sale to Discovery Kids Channel in tow.

**Concept:** This preschool program follows the adventures of Willa, an unforgettable little girl who brings home stray penguins and rabbits instead of cats and dogs, much to the chagrin of her understanding but conventional father. Her animals are not just her friends, they offer Willa counsel, giving her their unique and often humorous takes on problem-solving. Like a young Lucy Ricardo, Willa finds herself in comical predicaments that escalate as she fumbles her way towards finding solutions.

**Demo:** preschool

**Initial territories of interest:**

At this early stage in Willa's life cycle, Nelvana is waiting for the show to find a global audience, which will in turn stimulate brand-building initiatives. The prodco is fielding interest in key international territories.

**For licensing opportunities, please contact:**

Marie-Laure Marchand (Europe), 33-1-4271-0828, [mlm@paris.nelvana.com](mailto:mlm@paris.nelvana.com); Mark Northwood (North America), 416-530-2820, [mark.northwood@corusent.com](mailto:mark.northwood@corusent.com); Graham Saltmarsh (the U.K.), 44-207-439-6400, [grahams@nelvana.com](mailto:grahams@nelvana.com); Lily Yan (Latin America and Asia Pacific), 416-530-2836, [lily.yan@corusent.com](mailto:lily.yan@corusent.com)

## Willa's Wildlife

### At-a-Glance Temperature Read

**Overall potential in respondents' product categories/territories:** good

**Would respondents add Willa's Wildlife to their portfolios:** yes (46%), no (23%), n/a (31%)

**Best potential product category:** Apparel, accessories

**Desired retail channel for merch launch:** mid-tier (50%), mass (40%), high end/specialty (10%)

**Expected royalty range:** 8% to 12%

Willa, and her retro-inspired house filled with animals, took top marks among our respondents, with 50% deeming the property's licensing potential as good or very good. The key concern expressed by most who answered the questionnaire, however, had to do with the über-competitive nature of the preschool environment right now. It's no secret the field is very crowded, and many suggested Nelvana needs to find Willa's clear point of differentiation in order to score points with retailers. "The preschool market is overrun with little kids and animals," said one respondent. Another said Willa's palette is too soft and the bold hues attached to other preschool properties would overshadow her at retail.

PBS, Discovery Kids, BBC, Sprout, and Nickelodeon were all mentioned as possible broadcast homes for the series. More importantly, as one participant noted, the series needs to be stripped daily and accompanied by a strong on-line presence to reinforce the brand with its intended core audience, if its products are to pop at retail.

"PSI" continued from page 67

There are, of course, the three lead characters that demonstrate another little piece of structural acumen. The lead Eizan and his support Jimmy B and Okuni are like Harry, Ron and Hermione—or Luke, Leia and Han. The three work and operate as a team whilst conveying different views and opinions, creating three extremely strong identification patterns and offering the audience a choice of lead character. And this widens the appeal and stretches the show's demo. Simple.

*Shuriken* is essentially a playground show and has all the safe and familiar qualities that make these programs work. But it is also epic. It has its own incredibly rich and detailed universe with good and evil at its epicenter. The experience for the children is one of grand storytelling with history, tradition, culture and one hero's journey. In short, the show is so much bigger than it at first appears and this is why we believe it has a longevity that will see it run.

#### Case File #4: STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE

The thing about Strawberry Cake, as we affectionately call her, is she's 25-years-old but still looks eight. Strawberry is now a perennial and it's probable that she'll stay that way. She's transcended two generations, and with the support she's likely to be getting over the coming year she'll make it to her third generation without breaking a strawberry-scented sweat.

Perhaps one of the strongest aspects of Strawberry Cake is she has great brand width—she's able to move between demos from as young as two to as old as nine (perhaps even older in some cultures). A good example of this came last summer when a Strawberry QSR premium was distributed throughout the U.K. Girls ages two to 10 were seen wearing their clip-on Strawberry-themed lip balms. Yes, wearing them. There was pride in these little girls as they walked through the mall with perhaps three or four of the clips adorning their clothing. Little girls don't usually do this unless they've invested money and emotion into something. And they certainly don't do it if their younger siblings do.

But why does Strawberry Cake warrant a PSI? Her strawberry scent is what sets her apart. During the summer of 2005, we asked 78 mothers what they would like their children to smell of—and 72% said strawberries.

Moreover, children learn via their senses from birth. Interestingly, there's been little research conducted to date that looks at the sense of smell and its impact on our psyche. It's one of our strongest senses for evoking memories. So, when a girl receives a gift of an SSC product, it's likely that she'll be happy—she's just received a gift. Strawberry smells nice to most little girls and



#### Pieces of Cake—Why Strawberry works

**The palette—the colors and tones work across the ages**

**The central theme of friendship is the strongest of hooks from which to hang a story**

**The universe is diverse and solidly rich and is therefore engaging to different ages for different reasons**

**There is a fairy tale element fluttering along throughout**

**She's autonomous, independent and actually quite aspirational**

**She goes to exciting places all on her own—there's not an adult in sight, but it's all incredibly safe**

**Her L&M range seems to have it cracked—there's soft stuff at the young end and more lifestyle products for older girls**

the brain categorizes that moment in a cerebral filing cabinet labelled "Good Memory." The child and Strawberry Cake have built a positive association that cannot be erased, and in brand terms that's as good as it gets.

There's not enough space here to perform a forensic examination of each attribute that makes these brands work. We have focused on just one or two key elements. However, there is one overriding factor connecting each of these properties—they simply and effectively tell excellent stories that are developmentally appropriate for the target audience. It boils down to that old adage: Understand your audience and tell the story they need to hear. ■

*Gary Pope is a partner at Kids Industries (kidsindustries.com), a U.K.-based research and consulting firm that helps companies understand how their brands, properties and products connect with kids. KI's client list includes The BBC and 4Kids Entertainment. Contact Gary at gary.pope@kidsindustries.com.*

# people in new jobs



Alex Chien



Micheal Dresner



Karen Hunter



Jeremy Laws



Flavio Medeiros



Shari Rosenfeld



Michele Schuessler

**AOL** (Los Angeles, California, 818-340-5896): **LaShun Lawson** has been named the new licensing director for AOL's KOL and its teens service, RED. Developing and creating licensing opportunities for on-line brands is Lawson's principal duty in the newly created role. She will be dealing with new and existing brands, including Kung Fu Academy and Princess Natasha. Lawson comes to AOL from NFL Players Inc, where she served as assistant VP of multimedia and interactive. Her 10 years of licensing, sales and marketing experience also includes jobs as a supervisor for Coca-Cola, and executive producer/co-owner of Target Sports Marketing.

**ABC Australia Enterprises** (Sydney, Australia, 61-2-8333-1500): As the new GM for worldwide consumer publishing and content sales, **Ty Speer** will be tackling DVD distribution, licensing, event management and international product sales. Prior to joining ABC, he worked as GM of sales and commercial products for the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Corporation. Before that, he was managing director of Octagon Worldwide, an international consulting agency for the sports and entertainment industries.

**American Greetings** (Cleveland, Ohio, 216-252-7300): American Greetings is beefing up its properties division with two new hires. **Michael Dresner** has signed on as VP of marketing for AG properties, and he will put his 15 years of experience to work leading a team to drive brand strategies. Dresner comes from Nickelodeon & Viacom Consumer Products, where he served as VP of global brand development. **Michele Schuessler** also joins the team as brand manager. Schuessler will apply the experience she gained while at Sesame Workshop, where she served as new business development manager after a stint as marketing manager for global consumer products. In her new position, she will be overseeing some of AG's biggest properties, such as Care Bears and Strawberry Shortcake.

**Bejuba! Entertainment** (Toronto, Canada, 416-994-9216): As part of its European expansion plans, **Karen Hunter** has been called in as head of sales to launch Bejuba!'s U.K. office. In her new post, Hunter will be charged with selling properties showcased at MIPTV last April. Hunter

comes to Bejuba! from Egmont Imagination UK, where she served as deputy managing director for international sales. Prior to joining Egmont, she was a sales executive for BBC Worldwide.

**BKN International** (Westchester County, New York, 914-921-6666): **Benoit Runel** has signed-on as managing director for BKN New Media, the company's largest operating subsidiary. In his new job, Runel will be in charge of sales and marketing for established and emerging markets in North America, Europe and the Middle East. He will also head up operations for BKN's London-based studio, managing international co-productions. Runel was previously Jetix Europe's senior VP of programming and acquisitions, and also spent seven years in the programming division at France's TF1.

**CBeebies** (London, England, 44-207-743-8000): Former BBC Children's head of animations and program acquisitions **Michael Carrington** has been bumped to creative director of CBeebies. Carrington will be responsible for CBeebies' digital channel output on BBC One and Two. He's logged more than 20 years in children's television and prior to joining the Beeb in 1990, Carrington served as a producer for Network Ten in Australia, acquisitions executive for the Discovery Channel, and head of television and new media for Create TV.

**Disney Publishing Worldwide** (New York, New York, 212-633-4400): Stepping up from executive VP of Disney Consumer Product's global home and infant business, **R. Russell Hampton Jr.** has been named the new president of Disney Publishing Worldwide. His new job will have him looking after worldwide operations of DPW's international book and magazine offices. Hampton has served as GM of the Baby Einstein company and VP of strategic planning and corporate development for The Walt Disney Company.

**Granada International** (London, England, 44-207-396-6000): **Katie Foster** has been appointed the director of licensing and will be charged with increasing Granada's licensing department output. Foster most recently served as brand business director for HIT Entertainment, and was responsible for the launch of Bob the

Builder. Her career in licensing began at BBC Worldwide with her work on Wallace and Gromit. **Flavio Medeiros**, meanwhile, takes up the sales executive post at Granada's new Latin America office and is charged with developing the company's profile with Spanish-language U.S. networks and regional broadcasters. Medeiros is a former programming executive for Walt Disney in Latin America and a senior manager of programming and acquisitions at Jetix.

**HIT Entertainment** (New York, New York, 212-463-9623): In the new role of VP of creative resources, **Jorge Ferreiro** is now shepherding the company's creative direction in licensing, home entertainment and overall brand activities. Ferreiro brings more than 20 years of creative experience to HIT and prior to taking up his new post he served as VP of global creative at Sesame Workshop. He's also done stints at Fox Family Worldwide as its department head for creative and marketing services and at Disney Consumer Products as a creative director.

**Jetix Europe** (London, England, 44-208-222-3600): Jetix Europe has bumped **Boel Ferguson** up from managing director of Jetix Nordic to managing director of both Jetix Nordic and Jetix UK. Ferguson has been overseeing operations of the channel's on-line and interactive divisions since 1999. In her new job, Ferguson will be adding the operation of the UK channel to her current responsibilities.

**Nickelodeon Asia** (Shanghai, China, 65-6420-7213): **Alex Chien** has been promoted to VP of creative and content and will be leading all creative strategies across Nick Asia channels. Chien moves up from director of creative and content. Prior to joining Nick, she was head of production and programming for Walt Disney Television International's Asia Pacific operation.

**Sesame Workshop** (New York, New York, 212-595-3456): As the new VP of developing and emerging markets, **Shari Rosenfeld** will oversee *Sesame Street* co-productions in Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia and South Africa. Prior to starting in this newly created position, Rosenfeld served as project manager, where she helped shepherd several international *Sesame Street* productions to market including *Galli Galli Sim Sim* in India and *Ruga Sesam* in Kosovo.

**Universal Studios Consumer Products Group** (Universal City, California, 818-777-5391): **Jeremy Laws** moves from executive director of Universal Studios Consumer Products Group to senior VP of the newly created Universal Mobile Entertainment. The new division is dedicated to exploiting mobile content opps, and Laws will head up all licensing and promotions efforts, backed by his sales teams in North America, Europe and Asia. Laws joined USCPG in 1999 as an executive director.

## Naito intros live action to Cartoon Network

**AS** Cartoon Network gears up to enter the live-action realm, Ramsey A. Naito has been called in as the new VP of long-form development to spearhead the endeavor. Naito's putting her six years of experience in development and production on Nickelodeon films such as *The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie* and *Rugrats Gone Wild* to work in the new post.

Naito's overseeing the network's first original movie *Reanimated*. Unveiled at CN's Upfront presentation this past March, the animation/live-action hybrid tells the story of a 12-year-old boy who needs an emergency brain transplant following an amusement park accident. "It's helping to define what live action means for us," Naito says. "We are making live action which has an animation sensibility and animation timing." The launch date is expected to be announced soon.

Naito hopes *Reanimated* will be the first of several Cartoon Network movies done in a quirky live-action style. She is now exploring various avenues to sniff out new projects



Naito is on the lookout for quirky live-action ideas

including taking pitches, meeting with creators and attending book fairs. Finding long-format toon projects is also in the offing; however, Ramsey is more interested in original live-action ideas right now. She hopes to put six to eight projects into development in the coming year, from both in-house and external sources.

Naito's keeping an open mind while taking pitches with the only requirements being that the material be funny and appropriate for CN's boys six to 11 demo. Although she will accept packages (provided they are not unsolicited ideas), she's primarily inviting pitches from agents, managers and studio contacts.

Since earning her Master's of Fine Arts from California Institute of the Arts, Naito has been involved in animation in one form or another. She landed at Nickelodeon first after working on the *South Park* feature film, the adult-targeted toon *Duckman* and various direct-to-video projects at DreamWorks. Kids entertainment was not her intended career path, but she is glad that it found her. "I fell into it for sure. But it was pleasant to fall into." **DW**



# How to reach

some of the key companies in this issue

**Al Ovadia & Associates**

Calabasas, California  
[www.alovadia.com](http://www.alovadia.com)

818-591-7050

**BRB Internacional**

Madrid, Spain  
[www.brbes.com](http://www.brbes.com)

34-91-358-6081

**BitTorrent**

San Francisco, California  
[www.bittorrent.com](http://www.bittorrent.com)

415-568-9007

**Cake Entertainment**

London, England 44-208-671-2459  
[www.cakeentertainment.com](http://www.cakeentertainment.com)

**Cyber-Groupe Animation**

Paris, France 33-1-4058-1443  
[www.cyber-animation.com](http://www.cyber-animation.com)

**Decode Entertainment**

Toronto, Canada 416-363-8034  
[www.decode-ent.com](http://www.decode-ent.com)

**Disney Consumer Products**

Burbank, California 818-560-1000  
[www.disneyconsumerproducts.com](http://www.disneyconsumerproducts.com)

**Dynatech Action**

Red Deer, Canada 404-343-0455  
[www.dynatechaction.com](http://www.dynatechaction.com)

**Entertainment Rights**

London, England 44-208-762-6200  
[www.entertainmentrights.co.uk](http://www.entertainmentrights.co.uk)

**Funrise Toys**

Los Angeles, California 818-883-2400  
[www.funrisetoys.com](http://www.funrisetoys.com)

**Garage Games**

Eugene, Oregon 541-345-3040  
[www.garagegames.com](http://www.garagegames.com)

**Gary Caplan**

Studio City, California 818-980-1191  
[www.garycaplaninc.com](http://www.garycaplaninc.com)

**Honest Entertainment**

New York, New York 212-929-5099  
[www.honestentertainment.com](http://www.honestentertainment.com)

**IDT Entertainment**

Newark, New Jersey  
[www.idtentertainment.com](http://www.idtentertainment.com)

973-438-1000

**ION Media Networks**

West Palm Beach, Florida  
[www.ionmedia.tv](http://www.ionmedia.tv)

561-659-4122

**Jetix Consumer Products**

London, England 44-207-554-9000  
[www.jetixcp.net](http://www.jetixcp.net)

**JK Benton Design Studio**

Bloomfield, Michigan 248-644-5875  
[www.kbtoys.com](http://www.kbtoys.com)

**KB Toys**

Pittsfield, Massachusetts 413-496-3000  
[www.kbtoys.com](http://www.kbtoys.com)

**Kids Industries**

London, England 44-207-684-3795  
[www.kidsindustries.com](http://www.kidsindustries.com)

**MédiaMétrie**

Levallois-Perret, France 33-1-4758-9435  
[www.mediametrie.com](http://www.mediametrie.com)

**MGA Entertainment**

Los Angeles, California 323-966-5771  
[www.mgae.com](http://www.mgae.com)

**MGM Consumer Products**

Santa Monica, California 310-449-3000  
[www.mgm.com](http://www.mgm.com)

**NBC Universal**

Universal City, California 818-840-4444  
[www.nbcuni.com](http://www.nbcuni.com)

**Nelvana**

Toronto, Canada 416-530-1191  
[www.nelvana.com](http://www.nelvana.com)

**New Line Cinema**

New York, New York 212-649-4900  
[www.newline.com](http://www.newline.com)

**Nickelodeon Consumer Products**

New York, New York 212-258-6000  
[www.nickelodeon.com](http://www.nickelodeon.com)

**Nickelodeon U.K.**

London, England  
[www.nickelodeon.co.uk](http://www.nickelodeon.co.uk)

44-207-462-1011

**Nintendo**

Redmond, Washington  
[www.nintendo.com](http://www.nintendo.com)

425-882-2040

**PBS Kids Sprout**

Pennsylvania, Philadelphia  
[www.sproutletsgrow.com](http://www.sproutletsgrow.com)

215-667-2703

**Red Fox Productions**

Suffolk, England  
[www.redfoxproductions.com](http://www.redfoxproductions.com)

44-1508-482-630

**Red Kite Animation**

Edinburgh, Scotland  
[www.redkite-animation.com](http://www.redkite-animation.com)

44-131-554-0060

**Sesame Workshop**

New York, New York  
[www.sesameworkshop.org](http://www.sesameworkshop.org)

212-595-3456

**Sony Computer Entertainment**

Foster City, California  
[www.scea.sony.com](http://www.scea.sony.com)

650-655-8000

**Sony Pictures Consumer Products**

Culver City, California  
[www.sonypictures.com](http://www.sonypictures.com)

310-244-7788

**Star Farm Productions LLC**

Chicago, Illinois  
[www.starfarmproductions.com](http://www.starfarmproductions.com)

312-226-7130

**Taffy Entertainment**

Woodland Hills, California  
[www.taffyentertainment.com](http://www.taffyentertainment.com)

818-999-0062

**The NPD Group**

Paris, France  
[www.npdworldwide.com](http://www.npdworldwide.com)

33-1-5578-2525

**Warner Home Video**

Santa Monica, California  
[www.warnervideo.com](http://www.warnervideo.com)

818-954-6429

**WickedCoolGirls**

Los Angeles, California  
[www.wickedcoolgirls.com](http://www.wickedcoolgirls.com)

818-985-0229



# Calendar of Events

Annecy	June 5-10	Annecy, France	33-4-5010-0900	www.annecy.org	Animation
Star Power	June 6-7	Universal City, CA	212-420-1100	www.pmalink.org	Mktg/Promo
nextMEDIA	June 9-11	Banff, Alberta	403-678-1216	www.nextmedia2006.com	MM
Book Expo Canada	June 9-12	Toronto, On	416-848-1692	www.bookexpo.ca	Publishing
SGMA Spring Market	June 11-13	Las Vegas, NV	202-775-1762	www.sgma.com	Sports/Apparel
Banff World Television Festival	June 11-14	Banff, Canada	403-678-1216	www.banff2006.com	TV
Connecting with Kids & Youth 2006 Forum	June 13-15	Chicago, IL	305-667-4705	www.trademeetings.com	Marketing
Shanghai Television Festival	June 18-21	Shanghai, China	86-21-6253-7115	12th.stvf.com	TV/Prod/Prog
Licensing 2006 International	June 20-22	New York, NY	203-882-1300	www.licensingshow.com	Licensing
Promax & BDA Conference & Exposition	June 20-22	New York, NY	310-788-7600	www.promax.tv	TV/Promo/MM
Discop	June 22-24	Budapest, Hungary	310-453-4440 (U.S.)	www.discop.com	TV/Prog/Prod
Cartoon Finance	June 23-24	Halle, Germany	32-2-242-9343 (Belgium)	www.cartoon-media.be	Animation
Monte Carlo Television Festival	June 26-July 1	Monte Carlo, MONACO	377-93-10-40-60	www.tvfestival.com	TV
Showcomotion	June 29-July 8	Sheffield, UK	44-11-4276-3534	www.showcomotion.org.uk	Film
Hong Kong Licensing Show 2006	July 4-6	Wanchai, Hong Kong	852-2584-4016	www.hklicensingshow.com	Licensing
Tokyo International Book Fair	July 6-9	Tokyo, Japan	81-3-3349-8507	www.reedexpo.co.jp	Publishing
VSDA's Home Entertainment 2006	July 10-13	Las Vegas, NV	888-778-8892	vsdahomeentertainment.com	HE
Comic-Con	July 20-23	San Diego, CA	619-491-2475	www.comic-con.org	Publishing
Seoul Character Fair 2006	July 26-30	Seoul, Korea	82-2-6000-6091	www.characterfair.org	Animation
NATPE TV Producers Bootcamp	July 27-28	West Hollywood, CA	310-453-4440	www.natpe.org	TV/Prod/Prog
SIGGRAPH 2006	July 30-Aug. 3	Boston, MA	312-321-6830	www.siggraph.org	Inter/Anim/MM

## Industry Legend

Advertising-Ad  
Animation-Anim  
Apparel-App

Distribution-Dist  
Electronics-Elec  
Film-F

Games-Gam  
Home Entertainment-HE  
Interactive-Inter

Licensing-Lic  
Manufacturing-Mfg  
Marketing-Mktg

Merchandising-Merch  
Multimedia-MM  
Production-Prod

Promotion-Promo  
Programming-Prog  
Publishing-Pub

Sports-Sp  
Toys-T  
TV-TV

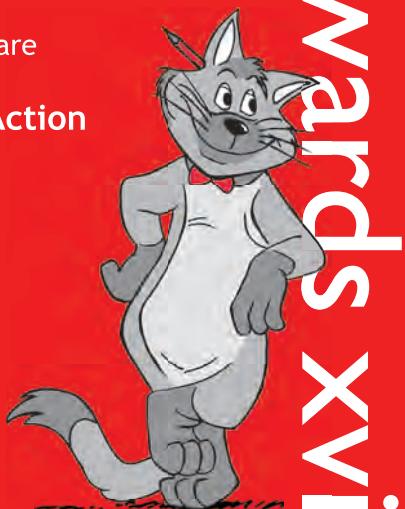


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# coolwatch

Research tidbits found in this feature are extracted from the April/May 2006 issue of KidSay's Trend Tracker, a syndicated study published five times a year that breaks down what's cool and what's not according to 1,000 American kids ages eight to 15. KidSay, an 11-year-old full-service kids market research firm, works with schools and youth organizations in hundreds of U.S. cities to collect and analyze data about trends emerging in the categories of entertainment, famous people/characters, internet, food/beverage, spending, toys and lifestyle. If you'd like more information about Trend Tracker, please visit the KidSay website ([www.kidsay.com](http://www.kidsay.com)), or contact Bob Reynolds by phone (866-273-8555/913-390-8110) or by e-mail ([bob@kidsay.com](mailto:bob@kidsay.com)).



## Question: Do you collect anything?

### Boys 8 to 11 (286 kids)

Yes	(69.2%)
No	(30.8%)

### Boys 12 to 15 (227 kids)

Yes	(62.1%)
No	(37.9%)

### Girls 8 to 11 (301 kids)

Yes	(73.1%)
No	(26.9%)

### Girls 12 to 15 (253 kids)

Yes	(51.0%)
No	(49.0%)

## Question: What do you collect?

### Boys 8 to 11 (189 kids)

baseball cards	(9.0%)
money	(7.4%)
Yu-Gi-Oh! cards	(6.9%)
playing cards	(5.8%)
rocks	(5.8%)
sports/trading cards	(5.8%)
state quarters	(5.8%)
video games	(5.8%)

### Boys 12 to 15 (134 kids)

baseball cards	(8.2%)
sports/trading cards	(8.2%)
shoes	(6.7%)
toy cars	(6.7%)
money	(6.0%)
playing cards	(6.0%)
video games	(6.0%)
books and magazines	(4.5%)

### Girls 8 to 11 (212 kids)

stuffed animals	(9.9%)
dolls	(9.4%)
rocks	(9.0%)
animals	(7.1%)
money	(5.7%)
sea shells	(5.7%)
arts and crafts	(5.2%)
stickers	(4.7%)

### Girls 12 to 15 (124 kids)

dolls	(7.3%)
jewelry	(6.5%)
money	(6.5%)
stuffed animals	(5.6%)
pictures	(4.8%)
Beanie Babies	(4.0%)
notes/letters	(4.0%)
shoes	(4.0%)



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